

Adam and Caroline

Conal O'Riordan

BURBANK MILITARY ACADEMY

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ADAM AND CAROLINE

"I AM AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURE,"
said Mr. Lincoln in the Senate.
Known to be a really good in comedy and
tragedy. He looks no longer for "Thousands
of readers who admire the dancing with the
wind characteristic, and the realism of the
day of Lincoln's will only the first two. Young
Ladies (Ladies) have a book as charming
and with as anything he has yet written—
delightful, lively, and. Mr. Lincoln is one of
the few living novelists who understand that
comedy is not merely something funny but
something true. That is why his characters—
at once so varied, so evoked, so entertaining
and so completely convincing—are regarded
with real affection by his
many readers.



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ADAM AND CAROLINE

Being the Sequel to *Adam of Dublin*

by

CONAL O'RIORDAN

Author of 'Adam of Dublin,' 'In London' etc.

Δαυίδ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγέννησε τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρλου



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TO
FRANCIS R. PRYOR
MY FRIEND AND ASSOCIATE IN
A GREAT ENTERPRISE

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Chapter One

ADAM LISTENS TO THE BELLS

ON the early morning of his thirteenth birthday, a boy was wakened from his dreams of the night by the bells of St George's Church, Dublin, ringing four; and as he lazily noticed dawn breaking across the church spire, conjured up dreams of the day to come, full of the importance of one entering upon his teens. From under his pillow he drew a document constituting legal evidence that he had been born in Dublin as the sun was entering Taurus in one of the last years of the last century, and baptised at the Pro-Cathedral, that being his parish church, ere the month was out. His father's name was given as Malachy Macfadden and his own as Adam Byron O'Toole Dudley Wyndham Innocent; a long, strong, and proud name for one so unpretentiously begotten. His sponsors were a Miss or Mrs Emily Robinson, since, even as Mr Malachy Macfadden himself, deceased, and Mr Byron O'Toole, who, still very much alive, had been appointed by the widow his legal guardian, together with Stephen Macarthy, Esquire, of Mountjoy Square, and Turlough O'Meagher Leas-ridere, of Capua Terrace, Sandycove. . . . What mainly interested him in his Baptismal Certificate (procured for the purposes of the Intermediate Examination when at the Jesuit College in the house called by Luke Gardiner, first Lord Mountjoy of the last creation, who had built it for his own use in the reign of George III., Belvedere) was the statement of his age

Yesterday he was a child . . . but to-day he was a

Adam and Caroline

man, going to be a man quite shortly. . . . Great things begin to happen to you once you enter your teens. . . . What was the long word that Mr Macarthy said Herr Behre mispronounced . . . ? Adolescence . . . in German *Jugend*. . . . Adam was beginning to learn German . . . It was not as interesting as French, or at least it was not as easy, but somehow he liked German: perhaps that was because he liked Herr Behre. . . . Herr Behre was a kind man, though he had queer notions about pictures, and he was not so wise as Mr Macarthy . . . Mr Macarthy said adolescence meant more than the German word *Jugend*. . . . The meaning of words was very queer. . . . Mr Macarthy said that the meaning of a word was conveyed by the tone of voice in which it was said . . . and yet Mr Macarthy had thousands of books, to which he seemed to pay more attention than to the voices of his friends. Mr Macarthy was a queer old fellow. He did not like him as much as he had liked Father Innocent Feeley; Father Innocent had been to him from the beginning all that was good upon earth, that could be good in Heaven, he would never love anyone as he had loved Father Innocent, but he liked Mr Macarthy pretty well; he liked him and Herr Behre and Mr Turlough O'Meagher better than anyone else in the world now. For Father Innocent was dead too, lying at Glasnevin, not so far from Mr Macfadden and Miss or Mrs Robinson, and perhaps Caroline Brady . . .

Perhaps Caroline Brady . . . odd that he did not know if Caroline Brady were dead or alive . . . ! Caroline Brady, if she were alive, how old would she be to-day? How long was it since they met . . . and parted . . . ? Four years was it . . . or five . . . or maybe six . . . ? He could not reckon the years backward yet. . . . Mr Macarthy was just beginning to teach him the meaning of Time. . . . 'Take care of Time,' Mr Macarthy had said, and 'Eternity will take

Adam Listens to the Bells

care of itself.' It was this thought that made him interested in his precise age. He had lived thirteen years. He was still a boy. But when he had lived as long again . . . that is to say, a quarter of the way through the twentieth century, he would be twenty-six, the age at which Napoleon became famous as the conqueror of Italy . . . as long again, say, and he would be thirty-nine, middle-aged, nearly as old, perhaps, as Mr Macarthy himself. . . . And yet thirteen years from that, half way through the century he would be fifty-two, the age at which Shakespeare died . . . on his fifty-second birthday, it was said. It was a queer notion to die on your birthday . . . perhaps thirty-nine years from now he, too, might be dying, like Shakespeare, on his fifty-second birthday. Anyhow, thirty-nine years was a good long time, almost forty years, three times as long as he had been living already, and it seemed to him as if he had been always alive . . . and yet he remembered the papers he used to sell with news in them that was stale before he was born . . . the news of the death of Sir David Byron-Quinn, for example, killed in the Soudan, near a quarter of a century before Adam was born. And Sir David was the . . .

It was a queer thing, surely, that Herr Behre, known to Miss Gannon, their common landlady, as 'That Frenchman' (which was ridiculous; for so far as he was anything, he was a German) should think that Adam resembled that grand, if rather naughty, baronet and adventurer, Sir David Byron-Quinn, while Adam himself found him uncannily like his godfather, Mr O'Toole. When Mr O'Toole was particularly pleased with the way the world treated him (which was seldom) he looked at you with eyes that were almost the same as Lady Daphne Page gave Sir David Byron-Quinn in her portrait of him at the National Gallery. He knew that portrait well; for he often went to the gallery now to look at it. Also he went there to look at what

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was called a bird's-eye view of Dublin, painted by a man called Mahoney, from the spire of St George's Church, the very spire he saw through his window, in 1850 . . . that was half a century before Adam was born. Yet he thought Dublin looked much the same then as now. Immediately in the foreground of the picture, you could see the line of houses, the backs of them, from Findlater's Church up Gardiner's Row and Great Denmark Street (with the new school building he had suffered so much in not yet there, thank God!) to Mountjoy Square, with the windows of the room that were now Mr Macarthy's but then belonged to some great man, a Lord Chancellor, was it? . . . The Lord Chancellor was the head of the Law. He knew now from Mr Macarthy that the Law was not necessarily always wrong . . . though, perhaps, more often wrong than right. Mr Macarthy's own father had been a great lawyer, though not a Lord Chancellor, nor a lord nor a chancellor of any kind. Was he what they called a judge? No, he thought he had not been a judge. To be a judge you had to pretend to be half an Englishman . . . and that was humbug. And Mr Macarthy's father hated humbug. So did Mr Macarthy. Adam was a little afraid of Mr Macarthy: he hated humbug so very bitterly. It would never do to tell the smallest lie to Mr Macarthy.

He had never told a lie to Father Innocent: but he wondered if he might not be tempted some day to tell one to Mr Macarthy . . . queer feelings come over you when you are thirteen . . . and Mr Macarthy asked questions Father Innocent never asked . . . not that Mr Macarthy was what you could call inquisitive. Mr Macarthy was a gentleman, and gentlemen are not inquisitive. To be inquisitive, Mr Macarthy said, was to ask questions you had no right to ask. Adam felt he asked no question he was not right to ask . . . but sometimes they were hard questions for a boy going on thirteen to answer truly. . . .

Adam Listens to the Bells

St George's bells rang six . . . and an Angelus bell was ringing too. . . . Adam sidled to the floor, stretched his arms, and yawned . . . one of the questions Mr Macarthy had asked him was what he thought about when he lay in bed, wideawake, yet not up and doing.

To-day he was thirteen, he would no longer lie in bed when once awake: he would be up and doing . . . then he would be less afraid of the temptation to tell a lie in answer to one of Mr Macarthy's questions.

There was also a jollier thought that called him out of bed: there was the thought of his birthday present . . . to signalise his entry upon his teens, Mr Macarthy and Herr Behre and Mr Turlough O'Meagher had subscribed together to buy him a bicycle.

The first present Mr Macarthy had provided him with was a large hip-bath, and, now that it was put before her as an economic proposition, Miss Gannon was willing to find for him as much hot water as he could use; so that ordinarily there was no self-denial called for by his ablutions. But he could not expect a bath full of hot water so early in the morning. . . . Eight o'clock was the hour for his bath water, and hard enough it was to get him to take it then. But this morning everything was different . . . he was thirteen years old, going to be a man. A man he would be at once. . . . He emptied his jug into the bath, slipped out of his night shirt, splashed two handfuls over the long hair on his head, then stepped boldly in and sat down in it . . . rather wished he hadn't, but persevered.

Ten minutes past six found him wrapped in the bath towel, scrubbing himself into a glowing heat, and feeling infinitely great and good. At half past six he was fully dressed . . . still virtuous, he sat down to do a little Latin before breakfast . . . by a

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quarter to seven the Latin Grammar had given way to the Latin Dictionary. . . . By seven he was reading Keats, starting *Endymion* for the hundredth time . . . it is impossible to say at what moment he relinquished this; but, when Miss Gannon brought him his breakfast, she found the table littered with books and he himself comfortably drowsing between two bicycle catalogues.

'There, there,' said she, 'I thought, on your birthday, you might at least be trying to turn over a new leaf.'

'I have,' said Adam. 'I've been at work for hours.'

'Ah, go on!' said Miss Gannon, but she did not speak so crossly now as she was wont to do when Adam first came under her charge. She was merely disturbed to think where on earth she was to store Adam's bicycle, that the barrister of great antiquity, though still junior in standing, who resided on her first floor, might not break either it or himself by falling over it when intoxicated.

Since Adam had become Mr Macarthy's ward, and even before his thirteenth birthday, St George's Place, from Miss Gannon herself to St Kevin the cat, had revolved round Adam Macfadden.

Chapter Two

BUYING A BICYCLE

AT nine o'clock Adam left the house to seek his guardian, his chief guardian, Stephen Macarthy. Normally it was six minutes' walk from his house to Mr Macarthy's, but this morning he would have done it in four and three quarters had he not encountered Dr Hillingdon-Ryde mounting his own bicycle at the corner of Gardiner Street, and Adam stopped to see that very large man mount nimbly as a boy upon his proportionally large machine, and speed off down Gardiner's Place like a travelling pillar of the Church. He did not go, however, without throwing Adam a cheery 'Good day,' in the voice of one interested in him individually, apart from his general benevolence towards the world.

Adam always felt that Dr Hillingdon-Ryde was a man he would like to know, ever since the day he had given him sixpence and a caution not to sell him old newspapers outside the Gresham Hotel. To-day he remembered how he had been wont to pray for the conversion of the good Doctor from the tenets associated with Geneva, or rather Findlater's Church, to those associated with Father Innocent. He smiled at that recollection now; smiled, too, to remember how Father Innocent had cautioned him not to touch his cap to him in any way that implied recognition of his sacerdotal pretensions: he had had difficulty in distinguishing between the kindly gentleman and the perverse Presbyter: he was cheered to reflect that anyhow he had never offended that early friend. . . .

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He noticed that Mr Macarthy always took off his hat to Dr Hillingdon-Ryde . . . it occurred to him now for the first time that Mr Macarthy did not take off his hat to priests with whom he had no personal acquaintance. . . . Also it struck him that he did not know a priest who rode a bicycle. . . . Dr Hillingdon-Ryde was a grand man, and yet he rode a bicycle . . . there could be nothing ignoble about riding a bicycle . . . it was pleasant to ride a bicycle. . . . Why did none of the Jesuits ride bicycles? . . . was it a question of dogma?

When he had entered the house in Mountjoy Square and was standing in the sitting-room of the upper part belonging to Mr Macarthy, looking down over the Square itself with glimpses of the Dublin hills over the roofs of the south side, he asked his guardian, 'Is there any reason why priests should not ride bicycles?'

And Mr Macarthy's answer was typical of him: 'If a priest does not ride a bicycle there must be some reason for it . . . however bad.' Mr Macarthy left it at that.

'I can't understand anyone not riding a bicycle,' said Adam.

Mr Macarthy smiled grimly. 'Perhaps you will understand more about it in a few days . . . or perhaps you may not,' said Mr Macarthy. Somehow Adam did not care for him so much as usual this morning. There was an irony in his tone from which Father Innocent had been entirely free. And Father Innocent was still to remain for some years from his death Adam's standard of right and wrong.

Presently Mr Macarthy and Adam left the house to purchase the bicycle. Adam had expected to be led by the more ceremonial route to the shop in Nassau Street, on the south side, where the famous transaction was to take place. That is to say, he thought he would be taken from the house on the north side of Mountjoy Square by Gardiner's Place and Denmark

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Street, turning to the left by Findlater's Church, down the east side of Rutland Square (commonly called Cavendish Row, though Cavendish Row was but the few houses at the end) into Sackville or O'Connell Street, with the Gresham Hotel so redolent of memories, particularly the savour ascending the area from the kitchen, over O'Connell Bridge, along Westmoreland Street, round the front entrance to Trinity College and the Provost's House, and by the south wall of the college to their destination. Since waking that morning his fancy had made the pilgrimage twenty times. It was disappointing that Mr Macarthy chose to bring him the dull and smelly way by the west side of the square and down Lower Gardiner Street. As they passed the eastern end of Pleasant Street, Mr Macarthy asked, 'Have you seen your mother lately?' Adam said he had not. 'Nor Mr O'Toole?' asked Mr Macarthy. Adam said he had seen neither of them since he had come into Mr Macarthy's charge some weeks before. And Mr Macarthy let the subject drop as they passed on into Beresford Place.

On the steps of Liberty Hall stood a shortish, thick-set man with a heavy moustache, talking to a taller man with a high complexion and a beard, who limped as he moved. Mr Macarthy waved to them and they gravely returned his salute. It surprised Adam that his guardian should be on cordial terms with these men; for he knew that his father, the pious and orthodox Malachy Macfadden, had found common ground with Mr O'Toole and Father Tudor in denouncing all persons connected with Liberty Hall, as anarchists. He was inclined to question his guardian on the subject but was too preoccupied by the thought of his bicycle to trouble himself to frame the question. Besides his mind was dulled and a little disgruntled by their following this tedious route, though in fact it was the shorter one.

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Over Butt Bridge they went, a train booming along beside them on their left, obscuring the very sky, and on into Brunswick Street, perhaps the ugliest street in Christendom; and then up Westland Row and round by Lincoln Place to the shop. And even in the shop disillusion awaited Adam; for they had not the bicycle that Adam wanted. It was there in their catalogue right enough, but it was not in the shop. Nor apparently was it in Ireland. It might possibly be in the factory of the firm for which the shopman was agent: but that was hundreds of miles away at Coventry: and even of its being there the shopman did not seem quite confident. 'There is a great demand for that number,' said he, 'there is a great run on it, it is very good value and I think they make very few of them.'

'A decoy,' said Mr Macarthy drily.

The shopman waved a deprecating hand. 'I wouldn't call it that,' said he. 'But there it is.'

'There it isn't,' Mr Macarthy corrected him. He looked at Adam's crestfallen countenance, then turned to the shopman again. 'If we order it is there any hope of our getting it?'

'Oh yes, yes,' said the shopman, 'if you care to pay for it now we could promise delivery . . .'

'When?' asked Mr Macarthy. The shopman consulted a book. 'We might be able to manage it next spring,' said he. Adam was conscious of a desire to assassinate the shopman.

'Thank you,' said Mr Macarthy. He looked at Adam and read his thoughts. 'I do not feel certain of living for ever,' said he, 'even though buoyed up by the hope of buying one of your bicycles. Have you anything in stock that you think would be suitable for our young friend?' The shopman was quite confident that he had; and in the end, despite Mr Macarthy's misgivings, Adam did in fact find himself in possession of a bicycle which he declared to be

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entirely suitable. He knew in his heart that it was too big, too high-g geared, too long-cranked and too heavy. . . . Mr Macarthy suggested all these objections, but Adam insisted that it was just what he wanted, so Mr Macarthy bought and paid for it, nine guineas. Adam was startled when he heard the price. 'One hundred and eighty-nine shillings,' he said to himself, and clenched his teeth: there was no going back on it now: whether he liked it or not, that bicycle must be all right.

After all that was not a really happy birthday. The thought of the bicycle and the many ways in which he knew it was going to prove unsuitable haunted Adam: the price of it haunted him. 'One hundred and eighty-nine shillings,' he murmured to himself, as he walked with Mr Macarthy along Nassau Street to Grafton Street. But there were strange happy moments in it. There was, for instance, the fine thrill of meeting at the corner of Dawson Street the Marchesa della Venasalvatica and Babs Burns.

They were a curious contrast, the Marchesa and Babs Burns: Adam thought it odd they should be walking together. The Marchesa perhaps looked less of a rag-bag than he had thought her on the night of his presentation to her at the Six Muses Club, when she had enlisted him in her company of young Druids; then she had been in a sort of frowsy full dress emphasising her untidiness. To-day she looked like an elderly Diana who had come a mucker in sloppy country. Adam's notion of the hunting field was as literary as his notion of mythology; but that is how he would have described the too-famous mistress of Sir David Byron-Quinn. Beside her draggled and faded beauty Babs Burns shone like the first bright flame of a new-lit fire . . . so far as Adam dared to look at her she was a radiant dragon-fly all green and gold. She had one arm interlaced with the Marchesa's and, bringing the other to meet it, she pulled her up

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short in front of Mr Macarthy. Adam found himself suddenly fierily resenting something . . . he did not know exactly what. . . . But he certainly did resent something as Babs Burns looked into the eyes of Mr Macarthy. . . . Resentment faded as he found himself walking beside Miss Burns, squiring her up Grafton Street. Mr Macarthy walked in front with the Marchesa on his arm . . . he was bringing them to lunch at Mitchell's. 'Don't you think,' said Miss Burns in Adam's ear, 'don't you think the Marchesa's simply wonderful?'

Adam readily replied that she was. 'I do indeed,' said he. He would have said anything that Miss Burns wished him to say. But he wondered in what particular Miss Burns herself expected him to find the Marchesa wonderful

She went on: 'I think she's simply sweet. Don't you?' And Adam again declared he thought her simply sweet.

Then he tried to originate a proposition. 'Getting on a bit, isn't she?' he said.

'Ninety if she's a day,' said Miss Burns, and the conversation flagged while Adam tried to reckon whether this calculation could possibly be correct. He was still doubtful of it when they reached Mitchell's.

Mr Macarthy led them upstairs, and in the least unquiet part of that thriving restaurant they lunched.

'It is Adam's birthday,' said Mr Macarthy, to explain his order of a bottle of port. Adam helped them to drink his own health, but he noticed that it was to the Marchesa that their host looked to do the main work of emptying the bottle. To himself as well as Adam he poured scarce half-a-glass, murmuring that they were pledged to Temperance.

Still all of them drank enough to make them talkative, and they were a merry party, particularly Babs. Adam thought her even more brilliant than her mother,

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though again he felt that strange resentment when she seized the opportunity of the Marchesa's bending to pick up her napkin, to take Mr Macarthy's glass and empty it. . . . He remembered (one of his earliest remembrances) seeing his mother take Mr Byron O'Toole's tumbler of porter and empty it. 'You see,' Miss Burns said to him, 'I make Mr Macarthy keep his pledges.'

True, Miss Burns was as little like his mother as Mr Macarthy was like his godfather . . still he did not like to see it . . . and was still pondering why when he vaguely realised that luncheon was over and that Mr Macarthy was telling him it was time to be going home . . .

He was relieved to find that he had full command of his limbs, though the situation of the stairs seemed to have changed, and a very extraordinary thing happened as he passed out into the street. . . . He turned expecting to see Miss Burns and he saw . . . Caroline Brady . . . then he felt Mr Macarthy supporting him. 'Has the wine upset you?' he asked.

'N—no,' said Adam . . . he could not see Caroline Brady any longer, but neither could he see Barbara Burns nor the Marchesa. Mr Macarthy put him on a car to bring him home, and by the time they had crossed O'Connell Bridge he was puzzling his brains again about the bicycle and had ceased to wonder whether he had seen Caroline Brady's ghost.

The night was falling when the bicycle was delivered at St George's Place. He took it out at once behind the church, made an effort to mount, fell off it and hurt himself so badly that he retired to the house in tears.

It had been a bitterly disappointing day, but he dreamt that night he was making quite a successful bicycle tour nowhere in particular with Barbara Burns.

Chapter Three

ADAM LEARNS TO BICYCLE

ON the second day of Adam's fourteenth year he rose as early as on the first, bathed only a little less enthusiastically, hustled into his clothes, and, having eaten a biscuit, descended to the hall. The staircase told him that he was still aching from his fall the night before: he had already been conscious of the bruises, drying himself after his bath. Still, he was determined to pursue, in the silent loneliness of the young day, his study of the art of bicycling.

Closing the door softly behind him, he tried to spring into the saddle in St George's Place, but did not succeed in doing so; so, as there was a milkman who might be watching him, he pretended to find there was something about the mechanism of the machine which rendered it unridable. He pushed it round the corner into Temple Street, where he tried to mount it from the step. He might have reached the saddle this time had not an unnoticed youth delivering newspapers advised him to pay a penny more and get inside. This so offended him that he thought it well to turn yet another corner before repeating the attempt. In Gardiner's Place he did reach the saddle, when the appearance of a policeman (he had not yet learned to love policemen) upset both him and his bicycle completely. This policeman, very young and very tall, picked him up in one hand and the bicycle in the other and tried to put them together again. But Adam thanked him and said he would walk. The policeman said, 'Sure, you'll never learn

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the filospeed if you don't get up on it'; to which Adam replied, rather priggishly, that he was not trying to learn the filospeed. The policeman good-naturedly explained: 'That's what they call a "bike" where I come from.' Adam tactfully asked where he came from, and managed to beguile the willing guardian of the law into a conversation which carried them through Gardiner's Place as far as the west gate of Mountjoy Square, where he bade his companion good-bye and let himself in with a key. The constable nodded sagely. 'Sure, I admire the science of ye,' said he; 'ye'll be falling a dale aisier on the grass plot than on the ground.'

But Adam had no intention of going on the grass plot. Apart from any other consideration, it was in too heavy a condition at that time of the year for him to ride his bicycle on. His bright idea was to mount the bicycle by the aid of the several seats standing at regular intervals round the centre plot. He counted on going from one to the other as it were from port to port. It seemed an excellent idea until he tried it, and indeed it remained an excellent idea when, two hours later, he went home, having mounted at the first seat many scores of times, albeit without attaining on any voyage even the half-way to the second. He returned home a sad and bruised and almost despairing, but a hungry and a healthy, little boy.

This programme was continued into the month of May without his ever quite reaching the second seat, except when he started with the second seat and tried with no better success to reach the third. When Mr Macarthy or Mr Behre asked him how he enjoyed bicycling, he said, 'Very much indeed.' And so, considered as an amusement, in the abstract he did enjoy it: but he sometimes wished, as he limped downstairs in the early morning, that some kind burglar had purloined the machine in the night. He hugged and kissed St Kevin when he found that that

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inquiring animal had punctured the back tyre with his claws. That secured him one morning's respite.

But the next morning he went with fresh courage to the assault; and that morning, perhaps favoured by the wind, he reached the second seat. Though unable to repeat his achievement, he returned to breakfast with the conviction that he could now report progress. It was disappointing that the next morning he did not reach even the half way mark between the seats. One reason, perhaps, for this was that he was conscious of a young gentleman making faces at him from a second floor window on the east side of the square. The morning after that he was horrified to hear the east gate slammed and to see the young gentleman himself appear. He was quite a big fellow: not actually tall, but very thick-set, with a square face and a dogged, cunningly brutal expression in his brown eyes. Adam guessed his age at twenty, or not far less; he was smoking a cigarette, and the fingers of his right hand were very stained from tobacco.

He came straight over to Adam with a sauntering, easy, intimidating gait. 'You're a bloody muff,' said he. Adam said nothing. 'You ought to be ashamed of being such a bloody muff,' said he. Adam said nothing. 'I'll show you how to ride that bicycle,' said he, and, taking it roughly from him, mounted. He rode round the centre plot, his legs much banded to allow for the smallness of the machine. Adam's heart was in his mouth lest he should decamp with it, but he returned to the point from which he started. 'Now, get up,' said he, 'and I'll show you how to ride it.' As Adam hesitated, he repeated in a terrifying tone, 'Get up, you bloody muff, when you're told.' Adam obeyed. His instructor seized the handle bar in his left hand and the pillar stalk with his right, and started running. He ran fast, very fast, and Adam felt he was but a feather in his grip. Then, with a

Adam Learns to Bicycle

mighty push, he let go, and Adam felt himself flying through space into the midst of a thorn bush. When he picked the bicycle out, he found both tyres punctured and the handle-bar bent. His instructor sat on a seat smiling and rolling himself a cigarette. 'That's all right,' he said; 'you really did ride that time, about fifteen feet.'

And it was a fact that Adam had, for the first time, really ridden a bicycle. When the machine was mended, he managed to ride, with three mishaps, all the way home from Mountjoy Square to St George's Place. Within a week he rode to the Park to see a review. And arrived only some hours too late. Out of evil had come good: he was a bicyclist.

It is true that Adam never really felt quite at home on that particular bicycle; but he could as a rule get into the saddle so long as no one was looking on, and he could not, perhaps, dismount as the word is understood by experts, but quit that saddle at the journey's end without materially injuring himself or the bicycle. His lack of facility in dismounting was a positive advantage in one way; for he never thought of dismounting at a hill until the gradient became so steep that the bicycle virtually capsized under him. He even came to like riding that bicycle, though he could not work up any passionate attachment to its personality.

It was a June day when he was inspired to pass the city boundary on the south side and cycle through Ball's Bridge to Kingstown, and on to Sandycove. He had not intended to stop there, but as he passed Glasthule Church he found himself nodding to the greengrocer who, how many years before? . . . had sold him the sprig of mistletoe which he had failed to hold over the head of Josephine O'Meagher. He chuckled to recall that he had not failed to kiss her, he was still chuckling when he caught his tyre in a tram line and slithered ignominiously to earth, with the bicycle dancing on him.

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'You might show us how you do that,' said the voice of Columba O'Meagher as he helped him to arise. 'Perhaps you wouldn't mind doing it again,' said Patrick O'Meagher; 'I didn't rightly see it.' Adam pretended to be amused, but he was not. Nevertheless, he condescended to accompany them to Capua Terrace, where Patrick oiled the bicycle and blew up the tyres, while Mrs O'Meagher entertained him with tea and buns. He would have preferred bread and butter, and he thought she ought to have remembered that he preferred bread and butter, but there it was: she gave him buns. He ate them with a sense of injury, reflecting that if Josephine had been there she would have remembered that he preferred bread and butter. . . . A tear welled in his eye to think of Josephine away preparing to be a nun and he there eating buns.

Presently he left them to return home. He started off gaily, answering, when Mrs O'Meagher asked him if it were not a long way, that he would be home in a jiffy: and, in fact, he was home pretty soon; for at Sandycove Station he dismounted or was dismounted by the bicycle and so back to Westland Row by train. There, assisted by the downward gradient, he swept from the platform to the roadway with a rush, and sustained a concussion with one of Mr Murphy's trams, which decided him to walk the rest of the way home. But when he had climbed the hill from Lower Gardiner Street into Mountjoy Square, he somehow achieved the saddle once again and remained in it until he collided with Attracta outside the domicile they shared.

Her apron torn, but suffering, apparently, no internal injury, Attracta said that bicycles were dangerous things, as you never knew where they would have you, and asked him where he had been. 'Somewhere between Kingstown and Bray,' said Adam carelessly.

'And did yez ride all the way?' Attracta gaped.

Adam Learns to Bicycle

'What do you think?' cried Adam, and Attracta, of course, thought he did. She thought even more; for she told Miss Gannon and Mr Gannon and Mr Murphy that Master Adam had ridden his bicycle she didn't know how far into Wicklow.

Herr Behre also heard rumours of this remarkable exploit, and mentioned it to Mr Macarthy, who looked puzzled. 'There's nothing out of the way in the distance,' he said; 'supposing he went to Bray and back, that would be well under thirty miles of fairly easy road. I did it myself at his age on a solid tyred Premier; but, somehow, I don't see Adam doing it, and I'm anxious about his doing it on a machine which I think is too heavy for him, though he won't admit it.'

'I have never bicycled,' said Herr Behre, 'but I think the boy does not walk so springily since he had that bicycle.' Their eyes met.

'By God,' said Mr Macarthy, and his face fell. He lost no opportunity in cross-examining Adam as to the famous ride. And Adam made no difficulty in telling him the truth.

'I only rode to Sandycove and came back by train,' he blurted; 'it's the truth, I'm no good on a bicycle at all; I'd never get up on it if I wasn't thinking of the money I let you spend on it.'

Mr Macarthy laid his hand on his shoulder. 'Come,' he said, 'if I make a fool of myself that's not altogether your fault, even though you did encourage me in my folly. I suspected the bicycle didn't really suit you, and I ought to have been with you when you were learning to ride it.' He shrugged his shoulders. 'Fond as I am of you, Adam, I can't attend to everything at once.'

Then Adam's head bowed over sideways on his guardian's hand and a tear trickled down his cheek. 'It's all I'm a silly, vain Billy,' he whispered. Mr Macarthy laughed softly. 'Better that than a Robin-a-Bobin a big belly Ben,' said he.

Adam and Caroline

In his repentance Adam would have relinquished bicycling altogether, but Mr Macarthy would not hear of this; and so, a fortnight later, Adam was in possession of another bicycle, less spick and span than the first; for it was second-hand: but it had the merit of being of a suitable size and weight. Then the real joy of cycling commenced. And it proved to be almost as real a joy as the cycling in his dreams, except that he never really came to like getting on or getting off, or mounting any but the gentlest gradient.

But it did open a new world to him. It did make him think that it was worth while to leave his bed ere inquisitive milkmen had commenced their rounds, and there were only dusty Dublin sparrows to watch him mount under the shadow of St George's Church, and trundle off over the Drumcondra tram lines up Eccles Street, past the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, where not so many years ago Father Innocent and a never-to-be-forgotten Sister of Mercy had saved his life from the Slough of Despond in which cruel fools had sought to smother it, and on, following the tram lines, over the canal bridge at Phibsborough, and again by the brewery near Glasnevin, the road the funerals go to the cemetery, past the cemetery itself, lifting his cap (at the risk of falling of) to the memory of Father Innocent, most beloved of all friends and teachers, to Miss or Mrs Robinson, still prayed for as one who had been good to a little child, and even to Malachy Macfadden, said to have been his father. He placed his cap back upon his head, and then lifted it again, this time saluting Caroline Brady, who might or might not be lying there. . . . Had he not really seen her in Grafton Street?

And so he would make a circuit by Finglas and the Botanic Garden, and home to breakfast with a hearty appetite.

Chapter Four

THE NAKED TRUTH

IN after years it seemed to Adam that he had known no happier summer than this when his bicycle carried him first from the muggy streets in which his infancy had been passed into the high air of the country that lay around Dublin. As a child he had not even lifted his eyes to note the fairy rim of mountains that looked down upon the city. If he saw them at all, he thought them clouds, and was surprised when Mr Macarthy told him that the line which broke upon the sky above the houses at the other side of Mountjoy Square were the hills that overhung Bray. It has been said that he would rather ride his bicycle on level ground than seek to climb a hill with it, and so, commonly, he took the easy roads lying inland on the line of the railways and canals to west and north, not those leading to the higher ground that lay seaward to the south and east.

But one day there came into his head a recollection of the book called *Canon Schmidt's Tales* which Sister had lent him at the hospital to read. He had not cared much for the book, but he had cared very much for Sister, and he recalled that this book had been given her as a prize for something, he could not remember what, at the Loretto Convent at Rathfarnham . . . he was seized with a desire to look with his eyes upon that educational establishment where Sister had been rewarded in some distant period for her, by him forgotten, achievement. So, it being a fine Sunday when Mr Macarthy was not expecting

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him, he mounted his bicycle and proceeded in the direction of Rathfarnham. So far he had not studied maps, and was uncertain of the way, so he followed the tram which professed to go there. He picked up this tram by the statue of the pious and immortal King William III., once the butt of patriotic humorists, but, since the end of the nineteenth century, revered as a Boer general who had conquered Britain.

The route pursued by this tram was little known to him, and for the first mile or two scarcely more agreeable than the neighbourhood in which he had first tasted the bitter cup of life. That cup was growing sweet to him now, but his present road recalled to him its earlier flavour. Dame Street was all right, but South Great George's Street was worse than the worst part of North Great George's Street, and worse than that again was Aungier Street, though he remembered vaguely that Tommy Moore was born there, and Clanbrassil Street was worse again. But, the canal bridges passed, there was a slight improvement, and past Harold's Cross a marked one. Beyond the terminus of the Rathmines tram he had the first feeling that he was getting near the country, over a bridge crossing a stream the air became fresher, and Rathfarnham village was a village and not a mere thatched slum. Here, too, he noticed that there were no more Metropolitan Police to destroy the peace, that duty being now entrusted to the Royal Irish Constabulary. Asking of one of them the way to the convent, he was given, in a surly northern accent, a wrong direction, and presently lost himself, having taken the first instead of the second turning to the right. He crossed another bridge, a very agreeable bridge over an agreeable stream, and came on to a mysteriously constructed village, the main street of which led nowhere: but, by circumventing it, as Mr Byron O'Toole was fond of saying, and riding boldly forward, he was presently conscious of an increasingly difficult

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resistance to his efforts, and perceived that he was actually riding up the lower slopes of the Dublin Mountains.

He persevered for a mile or two and then descended and walked. A feeling of exhilaration seized him when he saw that a building on his right was called Air Park. He surmised that he must already be high above the normal habitations of men. And in fact, though he was not very high, he was higher than he had ever been before: perhaps five hundred feet. Presently he was six hundred feet: and he was over a thousand feet before he turned into a field somewhere near Killakee, where the Hell Fire Club met in the days which his aristocratic friend Lord Queenstown, wearer of the archæological bracchæe, regretted and Herr Behre thought well done with. Adam had never heard of the Hell Fire Club, and had he heard of it would have disapproved; for it was still a little on his conscience that he had even so much as drunk his own health in port. Mr Macarthy had encouraged him to do this, and so it was not a dishonourable thing to do, but he felt it was a sort of sin to do anything which Father Innocent had even hinted was wrong. Nevertheless, he was conscious that he did many things of which Father Innocent had disapproved, and since Father Innocent was dead, he had confessed these sins to no-one, he was not yet even absolved by the Church for his hatred of Father Tudor.

But it was not of Sin, not of past Sin, that Adam thought as he climbed the mountain and lifted his bicycle over the stile in the meadow by Killakee, and lay down and stretched himself under a thorn-tree above a stream that ran musically through the woods to join the Dodder down below, and meander into the Liffey at Ringsend, and swim out thence, with the Bristol boat maybe upon its bosom, into the great world. From underneath that thorn-tree, lying lazily

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there, he could see the whole of Dublin valley, with the Hill of Howth that he had once taken for a sea-monster, resting on the water like a wolf-hound keeping watch; and, beyond that, Lambay Island, and away in the distance the Mountains of Mourne. . . . It was a beautiful sight, and, wonderful to relate, Adam, though he had never seen anything of the kind before, was conscious of its beauty, conscious too, vaguely, of a sort of pride that, though begotten in a filthy slum, he too was dust of the dust he saw moulded to such beauty. His heart swelled within him; he felt strange feelings, he wanted to kiss the earth . . . then he jumped up frightened, instinctively made the sign of the cross, and fled from that meadow. Outside, he tried to mount his bicycle, meaning to ride farther up the hill, but the gradient was too steep, and he fell off, grazing his ankle; the pain recalled him to the realities of life.

He was of a mind to go home, but as he stood irresolute the wind blew, it blew away the thought of home, and he walked on up the hill, pushing the bicycle in front of him. He was very hot, sweating all down his back, still he pushed on up the hill, past what motorists call a corkscrew bend, and now he was beyond all visible houses and out on the boggy moorland, threaded by the military road which leads away through the Dublin and Wicklow Highlands, he knew not whither. He thought he would like to lie down on one of these comfortable-looking tussocks on the moorland. He had no idea what such terrain was like, and was astonished to find himself slopping into water; but the air filled him as champagne might, and he pushed on with the bicycle, sliding and slipping from tussock to tussock, wet up to the knees, and the bicycle somewhat damaged, but thoroughly enjoying himself, perhaps sub-consciously pretending that he was Livingstone in the heart of Africa. Mr Macarthy had commended

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Livingstone to him as one of the very few heroes whose heroism would bear examination.

It was very hot now in the sun, but a delicious wind blew in that high place, a bold invigorating wind, a rousing wind that might have swept across all the great countries of the world and filled the lungs of all the great men, particularly the great young men, the youths, the boys since the first Adam was a boy in Eden. Adam thought vaguely of the first Adam as a boy in Eden; he wondered when that first Adam came to notice that there was as yet no Eve. In that high wind blowing across houseless and unoccupied mountain-side Adam was aware of the absence of Eve. It seemed to him that if he wandered on far enough he would meet her blowing towards him in that high wind. He knew not whence she was to come or whom she should resemble, he did not even visualise her as a Caroline Brady or a Josephine O'Meagher . . . absurd, he could not visualise Josephine O'Meagher as Eve: Eve would be a naked beauty, naked with the beauty of an Italian nude, a composite and eclectic Italian nude from the National Gallery.

He could not conceive of Josephine in lesser clothing than in a dressing-gown, with her hair down, as he had once kissed her (the only time he had really kissed her) going to her bath at Capua Terrace, Sandycove. . . . Capua Terrace, Sandycove, a suburban residence the garden of which in no way resembled the Garden of Eden . . . the Garden of Eden was a broad expanse such as the moorlands by Killakee as they looked with the sun on them in summer, with the west wind blowing, but with the addition of jewelled and fantastic flowers and marvellous wild beasts (tame wild beasts and quite harmless, neither male nor female) . . . what was the difference between male and female . . .? He had been told often enough, but it seemed a paltry, contemptible, dirty

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little difference, an absurd little difference associated with the Garden of Eden and the thought of angels with flaming swords . . . he had heard Herr Behre say that the Garden of Eden was *verdammtter Unsinn*, and that meant, he was not quite sure what it meant, but he knew from the way that it was said that Father Innocent might have been hurt to hear Herr Behre say it. He gathered that Herr Behre did not believe in a Garden of Eden conforming to the requirements of the Penny Catechism.

He was a long way from the road now: so far that even a big motor on it became just an automatic toy; people walking there were only visible by reason of their motion, but he himself, lost amidst the green and yellow tussocks, could not be seen by them. A little ahead of him the sunlight was reflected on a pond, a white cloud bathed in it, he felt like bathing in it too. Suddenly, he was naked, dancing in it joyously . . . queer things happen to you once you enter your teens. He had been dancing in it quite a long time, thinking queer thoughts as old as the ancient world, when his startled ear caught a sound, a sound very far off, but a familiar sound . . . the laugh of Miss Barbara Burns. Panic-stricken, he dropped full length in the pond, to hide his body in the fenny water.

And he saw pass in the distance three girls, or at least three females, of whom the foremost, all green and gold, was Barbara, and after her came another girl almost as pretty; and a little behind, much nearer Adam, came another familiar figure, no, not familiar, but recognisable: a tall girl, no, not a girl, but girlish—the lean lady he had seen dining with Barbara Burns at the Six Muses Club, the first time he had seen Barbara Burns.

Babs and the other girl were laughing and leaping from tussock to tussock, they took no heed of him; but the lank girl, who was not a girl, kept moving

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farther and farther from the others and nearer to him. Instinct told him that she had caught sight of the bicycle; she said nothing, but came nearer and nearer, not directly but sideways, like an elongated crab. From time to time she paused and looked round with an air of indifference, allowing always a greater interval to occur between her and the others as they sported on. . . . Adam lay very still; he was very frightened of this lady, he wished he had not plunged into the pond . . . he wished he had not taken off his clothes . . . he wished he had not left that prudent military road that runs through the Dublin Hills to the Lord knows where . . . the lady was close to him now, she was looking down on him without allowing him to be quite sure whether she saw him or not. She was not altogether a bad-looking woman, she was not old, she might, perhaps, have been justified in describing herself as a girl and dressing in a girlish way . . . but to Adam she conjured up a terrifying recollection, particularly terrifying in that wild and uncanny place to a youngster who a little while before had given himself to Pagan, if not positively naughty, fancies, the recollection of the Lay of St Nicholas in the Ingoldsby Legends. It seemed to him that this lady resembled that other lady who, on being exorcised by St Nicholas (that saint having caught her in the act of seducing his abbot) suffered a painful and shocking change; this lady seemed to have reached the stage, as Adam looked at her, when her beautiful eyes should turn to coals of fire, her exquisite nose grow a horrible snout, and her bosom go in and her tail come out. Physically, she seemed in this astonishing act of transformation; happily Adam made the sign of the cross, and she stared no more but passed on.

Yet Barbara Burns's laugh had long died away in the distance before Adam dared to emerge from his pool and dry himself, sadly and painfully, in his

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pocket-handkerchief. So far as he was concerned, for quite a long time after that Pan was dead . . . still there is no getting over the fact that wonderful things happen to you when you enter your teens . . . you may like it or you may not. As he bicycled home, in one long rush down the hill from Killakee to Rathfarnham, Adam said to himself that he must try not to like it . . . he also reflected that he had seen nothing of the Loretto Convent at Rathfarnham . . . he also wondered whether if it had been Barbara Burns . . .

Had Father Innocent been alive he would have gone to confession then and there . . . Father Innocent was dead.

Chapter Five

PIETY

AFTER his encounter with Pan upon the Dublin Mountains Adam arrived at St George's Place somewhat weary, somewhat stale, neither hot nor cold, and with a sore throat. Nevertheless, he thought he was hungry, and hungry or not supped injudiciously (Miss Gannon being out and Attracta irresponsible) on sausage, buttered toast and tea, into which Attracta forgot to count the number of spoons she put. That night for the first time in his life he made the acquaintance of the demon Asthma, who presented such an alarming appearance that he took him for Lucifer, and promised the Virgin Mary at once to mend his ways. In the morning he did not rise to take his bath, but arrived at Mr Macarthy's late and his toilet perceptibly ill-made. He was a little frightened as his guardian fixed his eyes upon him.

'What's the matter with you?' he asked. Adam declared there was nothing the matter with him, but Mr Macarthy brought him to the light and bade him to put out his tongue, and Adam's modest ears were shocked to hear him say, 'Bowels out of order.' He was not sure whether this was a question or not and was glad to hold his peace; for he did not regard this as a subject proper for gentlemen to discuss. Mr Macarthy went on: 'You're wheezing. Have you a cough? . . . Try to cough.' Adam failed to do this, and the anxious look faded from Mr Macarthy's face. 'It's only bowels out of order,' he said. 'What have you been eating?'

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Adam told him what he had been eating; and from that the conversation drifted or possibly was steered by Mr Macarthy into a channel running on the whole events of the day. During this conversation Mr Macarthy stood for the most part with his back to Adam, who thought that at times his shoulders rose and fell for some reason not to be understood by him. For Adam took that Sunday's adventures seriously. It was all very well for Mr Macarthy to blame that part of him which he did not like to mention, but how did he know it was not the devil? It occurred to him as they were talking that Mr Macarthy had never warned him, as all his other friends had done, to keep clear of the Gates of Hell. Even Herr Behre, though said to be an atheist, had confessed that he would not like to go to Hell, in dread of meeting Father Tudor. . . . And yet Mr Macarthy was a religious man. Every Sunday he brought Adam to mass at Gardiner Street, and not to short mass as Father Innocent had thought sufficient, but to twelve o'clock mass, where you had not only a lot of music to listen to . . . music of a kind he did not understand . . . but invariably a sermon which as often as not he found yet more incomprehensible.

Sometimes, of course, he liked the music and sometimes even he liked the sermon . . . particularly when it was not about going to Hell. And on the whole the sermons at the Jesuit Church held forth only a moderate promise of Hell. They did not make you feel as if you had got to go there whether you liked it or not, they allowed you to think that there were several games you could play without necessarily being damned. He rather gathered that you could bathe in the gentlemen's division at the Tara Street baths and die the same night without absolution and yet be punished with no worse than a few years in purgatory. But he did not think you could immerse yourself in a pool on the Dublin Mountains in the

same frame of mind as he did yesterday without being guilty of Hell fire. . . . Happy thought, he asked Mr Macarthy whether he believed in Hell fire.

Mr Macarthy answered promptly, as he was wont to answer most of Adam's questions, that if there was a hell it seemed reasonable to believe that there would be fire in it. This answer did not wholly satisfy Adam, but he had difficulty in finding terms in which to express his dissatisfaction. Mr Macarthy turned round and volunteered the advice that if he were Adam he would not worry himself thinking about the details in the arrangement of that establishment. 'The thing,' said he, 'is not so much to worry about what happens to us when we are dead . . . you will find that that will arrange itself . . . but to strive to be worthy to remain alive.'

Adam asked if he were worthy to remain alive, and Mr Macarthy answered that, so far, he was aware of no evidence to the contrary. 'As an earnest of my desire to keep you alive,' he said, 'here are some Liver Pills, take one of them going to bed to-night and remind me to-morrow to look at your tongue.'

Next morning when Mr Macarthy looked at Adam's tongue he declared him to be better, and morally and physically Adam felt that he was so. For some time after this his soul was divided between the merits of Liver Pills and those of religion. He found that the solace he had derived from taking the Liver Pills strangely reminded him of the comfort he had derived from confessing his sins to Father Innocent. He recognised that it was absurd, and he laughed at its absurdity; but there it was, a plain fact. He asked Mr Macarthy if he supposed that the soul resided in the liver; Mr Macarthy gravely replied that he did not think the word liver occurred in the works of St Thomas Aquinas, but that possibly such an idea might have commended itself to Averroes. Of the latter

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scholiast Adam had never heard, and Mr Macarthy's answer only made him think that it was a queer world. He told himself once again that it was the excessive queerness of the world that had betrayed Father Innocent into that unnatural appetite for rosary beads which cut short his sweet life.

He found himself paying more and more attention to the sermons at Gardiner Street, striving more eagerly to understand what the preacher meant. Sometimes he asked Mr Macarthy if he understood what they meant, and sometimes Mr Macarthy answered that he did not. More than once Mr Macarthy shared Adam's doubt as to whether they meant anything. But there was one priest who seemed to Adam always to mean something, and he was glad that Mr Macarthy also thought that there was something at least lying in his mind when he spoke. He was a young priest, and in a youthful way reproduced certain of the characteristics of Father Elphinstone, who had been spiritual director at Belvedere, and seemed to Adam the kindest creature in that academy.

The characteristics he reproduced were those in which Father Elphinstone resembled Father Innocent. But, as Father Elphinstone was more intellectual than Father Innocent (as Adam from the first recognised) so this young priest appeared to Adam and the world at large more intellectual than Father Elphinstone. He even used a terminology so much over Adam's head, particularly in modern economics, that it required frequent reference to the dictionary for its elucidation. But although Father Ignatius Steele held the language popularised by the Fabian Society, his message was essentially the Sermon on the Mount. As few of his congregation read the Bible, they were mostly unaware of this, and many gentlemen there frowned at what they believed to be heterodox teaching. The men of standing who had

the patience to listen to Father Steele's homilies declared that he was a Socialist. And all the while Father Steele, as ingenuous at heart as Father Innocent himself, believed himself to be vindicating Rome in the teeth of Liberty Hall. Father Steele was a well-meaning man: Adam was sure of that, and Mr Macarthy expressed no doubt of it. Ladies loved Father Steele, but, so far as the writer of this book is aware, there is no shadow of evidence that Father Steele loved ladies except inasmuch as he loved all things that he did not believe to be hostile to Jesus, as represented on earth by that society to which his saintly namesake gave Jesus' name.

For some time after that Liver Pill had purged his conscience Adam all but forgot that months were flying past since he had gone to confession . . . he had hoped that Mr Macarthy would say something to him about it, but Mr Macarthy never did: except that he brought him to mass, and would tolerate no excuse for his being late for mass, Mr Macarthy never touched on any religious subject not broached by Adam himself. . . . He wondered if Mr Macarthy were religious in the sense that Father Innocent understood religion . . . in what sense did Father Innocent understand religion? . . . Did he understand it at all? . . . If he understood it, why did he try to eat his rosary beads? Adam asked Mr Macarthy if he knew why Father Innocent ate his rosary beads. Mr Macarthy smiled. 'Surely,' said he, 'you ought to know that better than I.'

Adam shook his head. 'I don't know at all,' said he. 'Sure, I'd never eat my rosary beads.'

'Are you so sure?' Mr Macarthy asked.

'Sure as sure can be,' said Adam.

'But can one ever be sure?' Mr Macarthy insisted.

Adam warmed to the subject. 'Look here,' said he, 'Sure, you'd never eat your rosary beads, would you?'

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'If I had any,' said Mr Macarthy, 'Lord only knows what I might do with them.'

Adam felt as if he were treading on the tail of a comet, just failing to catch it. 'D'ye think God knew that Father Innocent was going to eat his rosary beads?' Mr Macarthy's answer came slowly and gently. 'I think,' said he, 'that Father Innocent thought God would understand him whatever he did . . . I beg your pardon; to be precise, he probably thought that God's mother would explain to him.'

'Lady Bland,' said Adam, pursuing a line the divergence of which escaped him, 'Lady Bland said that the Blessed Virgin was a common woman, as common as my mother.' He waited for Mr Macarthy to dispute this thesis, but Mr Macarthy only said, with the ghost of a yawn, 'I wonder what the Blessed Virgin would say about Lady Bland.'

Adam was electrified. It brought him so much nearer the Heavenly Host to think of a conversation with the Blessed Virgin on the subject of Lady Bland. He almost felt as if he would willingly die then and there from the sheer interest of hearing what the Heavenly Lady would say of the terrestrial one. . . . But if he died now in a state of, he suspected, something uncommonly like mortal sin, it would not be to the Mother of God he would have the privilege of addressing his remarks, but to . . . He asked Mr Macarthy if he knew the name of the devil's mother. . . . 'Try Hecate,' said Mr Macarthy drowsily, 'or any old thing.'

Adam suspected that his guardian was not in a mood for further theological argument. . . . To Adam, even now, theology and demonology were indistinguishable faculties. He felt that Mr Macarthy was rather frivolous in his attitude. . . . Father Innocent would have told him the name of the devil's mother . . . if he happened to know it. . . . He felt that

Father Innocent would have tried to whitewash that lady, but why need she be whitewashed . . . the devil was a fallen star . . . his mother had brought him up to be an angel, and what had gone wrong was not her fault . . . the catechism said that the devil's lot of angels were cast out of Heaven because through pride, he remembered the very words, because through pride they rebelled against God . . . silly asses not to know when they were well off . . . if he had been born an angel he wouldn't have been a bit proud about it, but only very grateful to be enjoying himself in Heaven instead of selling papers outside the Gresham Hotel, or, worse still, being slapped by Father Tudor for making a slip in his Holy Catechism at Belvedere . . . still, he didn't want to be in Heaven now that he had a bicycle . . . but he did want to keep out of hell, and he had an uneasy feeling that that bicycle of his might one day whisk down with him to the deep abyss which even Father Innocent had thought it possible for him to tumble over.

He asked Mr Macarthy if Mr Macarthy ever went to confession. Mr Macarthy answered, 'Not often' . . . he asked Mr Macarthy if he did not believe in going to confession, and Mr Macarthy answered that he saw much good in it . . . he asked Mr Macarthy whether he thought that he, Adam, ought to go to confession, and Mr Macarthy answered that he supposed he did go to confession. Whereupon Adam, somewhat awe-stricken, blurted out the fact that he had not made his Easter duty.

'Speaking as a Catholic,' Mr Macarthy said, 'that's pretty serious, you know. Technically, you are ex-communicate, and, apart from any other consideration, I think it insulting to the memory of Father Innocent that you should so soon have forgotten his teaching. . . . I am not your spiritual director, and do not presume to probe into your soul, but if I were you I should go to confession.'

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Adam said in a hushed tone, 'I can't bear Marlborough Street since Father Innocent died.'

'Why not try Gardiner Street?' Mr Macarthy suggested. 'Don't you think, for instance, that Father Steele might be as much use to you in a confession box as in the pulpit? He seems to me a decent chap.'

And so Father Ignatius took Father Innocent's place.

Chapter Six

FATHER IGNATIUS STEELE

NEARLY half of Adam's little life was gone since he made his first confession to Father Innocent; for six unbroken years, upon the first Saturday of every month, and sometimes on other Saturdays as well, he had taken his turn, or more often led the kneeling queue, outside the little priest's dusky confessional in the Pro-Cathedral. Never had he confessed himself to anyone but Father Innocent, and it was with a beating heart that now, too late to make his Easter Duty, and, therefore, if for no other reason, in dread of damnation, he went forth to face his new spiritual adviser, Father Ignatius Steele, in his den.

Needless to say, it was a Saturday afternoon when Adam sought audience of Father Steele: a July afternoon, that seemed to anticipate autumn, but was yet unusually hot and dry for Dublin, that moist city. Dust, hot as the sands that engulfed the mortal remains of Sir David Byron-Quinn, swept up and down Gardiner Street with the nervous wind, uncertain which way to blow. Adam was glad to get under the shade of the portico, 'tetrostyle of the Ionic order,' Mr Macarthy had called it, meaning that the four pillars with their entablature were of a fashion invented before the Catholic religion, or anything you could call a religion, in the Isles of Greece. Adam heard himself saying something aloud, not very loud, but loud enough for his own ears to hear and be shocked as he helped himself to holy water.

Adam and Caroline

The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece,
Where burning Sappho loved and sang . . .

Adam wondered why he should think of Sappho, and wondered why Sappho burned, and tried to remember whether Sappho was a male or female poet . . . but all he could remember about Sappho was that he or she left fragments, and his mind's eye conjured up a sort of politely epicene writer deliberately composing a shattered mosaic of verse. In consequence of this, he forgot to make the sign of the cross, and passed on into the Church, arguing with himself whether, since the front of the building was Hellenic in style, the holy water font might not be, perhaps, a Grecian urn. He genuflected before the High Altar, deciding that it was not the sort of Grecian urn described by Mr Keats; but by the time he had reached the Ignatian chapel, where young Father Steele was appropriately housed, he had attuned his mind to the more Catholic art on the walls, and walking the streets of the Renaissance, or rather the counter-Reformation, with Loyola and his great disciple who gave the Church his name, St Francis Xavier. Even ere he knelt down in front of Father Steele's box, he was already muttering to himself, albeit mechanically, an act of contrition. 'Oh, my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest my sins above every other evil, because they displease Thee, my God, who for Thy infinite goodness art so deserving of all my love; and I firmly resolve, by Thy holy grace, nevermore to offend Thee, and to amend my life.'

By dint of repeating this act of contrition several times, he convinced himself that he really was uncommonly sorry for something, and proceeded to examine his conscience to discover what. At a first glance he failed to place his finger upon the once too welcome guest whom he was about to call in the aid of the Church, as represented by Father Steele, to

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expel. . . . Ha, he had it: he was sorry for having missed his Easter Duty, sorry for having so long failed to confess his sins. . . . That was a sin in itself, to fail to confess your sins . . . he could have been excommunicated for failing to confess his sins. . . . Now for the sins he had failed to confess. . . . He scratched his head . . . the sins he had failed to confess. He was alarmed to notice that there was only one person now between him and the box, fortunately an old lady, who might not be very sinful, but experience told him that she would be long-winded. Old ladies who confessed to young priests had very long-winded consciences: you could hear them muttering away for hours, until the poor priest had to hoosh them out like so many geese. . . . Geese! he once had a goose of his own . . . that was a grand sin to confess. . . . Gluttony and Deceit, he remembered it well. . . . He couldn't think of anything like that to-day (there was that old lady going in). The worst of being so long away from confession was that you forgot all about your sins. . . . That made you look like a fool before the priest. . . . If it was Father Innocent, he would help him to think of a thing or two, but he couldn't count on any help from Father Steele . . .

He wished he could think of a sin against economics. . . . What was a sin against economics? . . . He had heard Father Steele say in the pulpit that somebody down at Liberty Hall had said something which was a sin against the doctrine of economics. . . . It was opposed to something that had once been said by Adam . . . he remembered it had been said by Adam, because hearing his own name in the pulpit had wakened him when he was dreaming about Caroline Brady (or was it Barbara Burns? . . . that reminded him of a sin) Adam . . . Adam . . . Adam Smith, a sin against economics was a sin against Adam Smith, he gave it up. . . . But there was a sin

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anyhow : he had thought of Caroline Brady or Barbara Burns (or was it Josephine O'Meagher?) when he ought to have been listening to a sermon. . . . What sort of a sin did you call that? He thought it must be taking the name of the Lord thy God in vain. . . . But God wasn't Adam Smith, and he did hear the name, only too late . . . anyhow, he would say he had broken the second commandment; he repeated in a whisper, 'What is commanded by the second commandment? . . . We are commanded by the second commandment to speak with reverence of God and of His saints and ministers of religion, its practices and ceremonies, and of all things relating to divine service . . . ' that was near enough : he had broken the second commandment all right. (He ticked off a second finger for this other item in the programme . . . he could hear the slide by the old lady open and her mumbling the Confiteor in a stage whisper, and pinched himself to think of something more. He was beginning to feel sorry now he had come to confession.) Happy thought : he ran through the ten commandments. 'I am the Lord thy God : thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day' . . . that was the commandment, the third he had broken, not the second. He snapped his fingers. What an ass Father Steele would have thought him if he had said the second commandment when he meant that he had broken the third . . . but if Father Steele did not know what he had done he couldn't guess which commandment he had really broken, and if he was really sorry for breaking it, sure, it didn't matter what the number of the commandment was . . . whatever commandment he broke, Father Innocent had always given him the same penance . . . but, then, Father Innocent seemed in doubt whether he had ever broken any of the commandments . . .

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except once, when he had told him that he had spoken disrespectfully of Mr Byron O'Toole. . . . Father Innocent seemed to think that was a sin against the fourth commandment . . . what was the fourth commandment? 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' . . . Mr O'Toole was not his father and his mother . . . there was that old lady coming out of the box and he not nearly ready; still, he was in for it now . . .

All in a flutter, he rose and, shivering down his back, stepped on tiptoe into the stuffy compartment, still warm with the vapours of the old lady. Behind the closed shutter he could hear Father Steele clucking what he judged to be disapproval of the tale filling his ear from the emptying conscience of the other penitent. He wondered what that other penitent was like: as he had been kneeling with his back to him, he had only caught a glimpse of him over his shoulder. . . . His impression was that of an old man . . . he shivered to think that he might be a dreadfully wicked old man, a downright awful old man, telling all sorts of sins to Father Steele. . . . A vague hope sprung up within him that the catalogue of the crimes of that old man might be so exhaustive that Father Steele would not have time to listen to any more that day . . . but there, he could hear by the mumble of the priest's voice that he was giving that old villain absolution after all. In a moment he would hear the other side click and his slide open. . . . He nerved himself to be ready to start off with the Confiteor the very instant that his slide shot back. . . . How did the Confiteor begin? . . . 'I believe in God the Father Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth . . .' No, how could he be so silly, that was the Apostles' Creed . . .

The distant slide snapped. Trembling, he was conscious of his slide rushing back, and he recoiled to the extreme border of his cage, where

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the young priest could not for a moment see him . . .

'Well?' came the questioning voice of Father Steele. 'Is there no one there?'

And Adam whispered 'Me.'

The priest's tone softened. 'Well, my dear child, what is it? Speak up.' Then, as there was a further pause, he prompted the young penitent. 'I confess to Almighty God——'

Encouraged by the kindly voice, Adam eagerly took up his cue. 'I confess to Almighty God to Blessed Mary ever Virgin to Blessed Michael the Archangel to Blessed John the Baptist to Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and to all the Saints and to you Father that I have sinned exceedingly in thought word and deed through my fault through my fault through my most grievous fault' . . . all this he said dramatically, if without punctuation, but then his mind became a blank.

Again Father Steele came to the rescue. 'How long is it since you have been to Confession?' As Adam still hesitated, he added: 'Am I right in thinking that you have not been here to me before?'

'No, sir,' said Adam, and suddenly began to cry. There was something truly paternal in the priest's tone, but fatherly in the sense of that spiritual paternity which was the only one that could suggest to Adam that there was anything amiable in attributing paternity to God. . . . Father Steele spent a longer time over Adam's sins than over those of the vaporous lady, or even the wicked old sinner he had just dismissed with the Church's pardon; and when at length the boy left the box and kneeled to say his first penance (by a miracle, as it seemed to him, the same as Father Innocent had given him but for the addition of St Bernard's prayer to the Blessed Virgin,) he felt himself to be very nearly, if not quite as much as ever, a little Catholic who loved his Holy Faith.

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He walked on air down the church and did not forget to cross himself when he took the holy water. . . . The weather had attuned itself to his repentance, nay more, the wind had veered into a patriotic quarter and brought up clouds of rain to lay the dust and spray Adam's face soothingly as the holy water of the church had sprayed his soul.

That was a very happy afternoon, with a happiness that outlived the night and nerved him to enjoy his cold bath in the morning and go empty-bellied to Holy Communion at Gardiner Street at seven o'clock. . . . By a happy chance that seemed to him more than chance that mass was said by Father Tuite, who had been rector of Belvedere during his short time at that school. There was something bitter-sweet that this priest should place the sacred wafer in his mouth . . . to Adam Holy Communion was a holy thing . . . so holy that he had found it hard to think of it in connection with any breathing man but Father Innocent. And when the breath went out of Father Innocent who was so holy as to be worthy to take his place? . . . He almost fancied now as the wafer melted in his mouth that he could see Saint Innocent praying to the Blessed Virgin that Adam should be led back to her and her Son by one as devoted to her as he himself . . . and so Mary had sent him to Father Ignatius . . . and Father Ignatius in confirmation as a sign had been inspired to direct him to St Bernard's prayer, which as he knelt now before her image he repeated as a joyful penance: 'Remember, oh most pious Virgin, that it was never heard of in any age that those who implored and had recourse to Thy powerful protection were ever abandoned by Thee . . . were ever abandoned by Thee . . . were ever abandoned . . .'

A gun had gone off . . . where was he? He had dropped his Prayer Book, why . . . saying the prayer of St Bernard after mass he had fallen asleep, that

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was all. It was a very early mass . . . he had never gone to so early a mass as that before. He walked home full of pride and airily waved to Dr Hillingdon-Ryde, who, as it was Sunday, was walking instead of bicycling down Gardiner's Place.

While waiting for breakfast he considered the ways and means by which he might realise the dream of his infancy and convert Dr Hillingdon-Ryde to Catholicism. He was sure that, if only he could persuade Dr Hillingdon-Ryde to go to confession to Father Ignatius, all would be well.

Chapter Seven

THE MARCHESA STARTLES FATHER STEELE

ADAM asked Mr Macarthy whether it would be practicable and proper for him to invite Dr Hillingdon-Ryde to meet Father Ignatius at a tea-party to be given by Adam at the College Restaurant. . . . The idea seemed to give Mr Macarthy much gratification; for he smiled quite a lengthy smile before delivering the opinion that he doubted if it were practicable. 'You see,' said he, 'they are both exceptionally busy men, and College Street is a long way to go.'

'You think,' said Adam, 'it would be no use to ask them?'

Mr Macarthy answered very thoughtfully: 'It is not for me to hazard an opinion whether it would or would not be of use. But supposing I wanted them to meet I am not sure that I should ask them to drink tea with me at College Street.'

To this Adam returned: 'Don't you want them to meet?'

'Why should I want them to meet?' Mr Macarthy asked.

'Don't you think,' Adam said, 'that it would be a good thing for Dr Ryde to have the privilege of meeting Father Ignatius?' And Mr Macarthy's smile broadened as he returned that that seemed to him a question better directed in the first place to Father Ignatius.

At first sight this seemed to Adam excellent advice. But he somehow felt a difficulty in asking Father Steele whether he did not think it would be a privilege

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for Dr Hillingdon-Ryde to meet him. So after much thought the conversion of that gentleman through his agency was temporarily shelved, but Adam did the best he could for him when not too sleepy to remember it in his night prayers. His morning prayers were rather hurried because of his healthy appetite for breakfast. At the back of his mind lurked the intention sooner or later to hear the claims of the Blessed Virgin put before Dr Hillingdon-Ryde in Father Steele's persuasive manner. He was sure that Dr Ryde was the very man to appreciate these claims if he once knew what they were.

It was a surprise when coming in to his guardian's room one afternoon early in September to find Father Ignatius and Dr Hillingdon-Ryde seated in arm-chairs at either side of the fire (Mr Macarthy was fond of a fire) and drinking tea poured out for them by the fair hand of the Marchesa della Venasalvatica, while somewhere in the background hovered Herr Behre and Mr O'Meagher. For once Adam was tongue-tied by bewilderment and made no effort to introduce himself into the conversation. He had been scarcely more bewildered if the Marchesa had produced the head of Mr Leaper-Carahar, C.B., from the muffin-dish. The conversation turned on the subject of strikes, and the word strike recalled to Adam, as he ate more than his due share of muffin, the fact that the first time he had visited Westland Row Station that because of a strike the Waterford Corridor Express was lying idle in the bay, and that he had pointed out to Caroline Brady and another young lady whose name he had forgotten, that the carriage at one end of the train was number nineteen and that at the other end was number thirty-eight, and he had told Caroline Brady that twice nineteen was thirty-eight, and Caroline Brady had said that it was clever of him to know that . . . the first sweet, unforgettable praise other than the condescension of

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elders he had heard from fair lips . . . to be sure Caroline's lips were not fair, hers was a dusky beauty. . . . He wondered why Father Ignatius and Dr Hillingdon-Ryde were talking about strikes instead of about the Blessed Virgin. The Blessed Virgin was the most interesting of all females and almost any female was more interesting than a strike.

He gathered that the whole company were interested in some strike organised by those wicked men at Liberty Hall. Herr Behre and the Marchesa appeared to be wholly in favour of the Liberty Hall side of the question: Father Ignatius and Mr O'Meagher were opposed to it: Dr Hillingdon-Ryde and Mr Macarthy appeared to sympathise with both parties, the Presbyterian minister explicitly and Mr Macarthy by implication; for Dr Hillingdon-Ryde mildly praised the arguments of both parties while Mr Macarthy drove a coach and four through them. Mr O'Meagher declared that it was no use having social trouble or expecting any remedy for any evil or troubling about it while Dublin Castle stood one stone upon another. Mr Macarthy said that some of the worst employers in Ireland hated Dublin Castle as much as Mr O'Meagher did. . . . The Marchesa said that one of the strike leaders resembled Christ, Mr Macarthy asked the Marchesa where she had been to school. . . . Dr Hillingdon-Ryde said that Mr Macarthy was rather severe on the Marchesa: Mr Macarthy said that was because he admired her so much. . . . Herr Behre said that the cause of humanity was the same all over the world: Mr Macarthy said that neither employers or employed were in the least interested in humanity as it was understood over the rest of the world. . . . Father Ignatius said with humble pride that Ireland was the one country that kept the Faith: Mr Macarthy said, 'And what a Faith to be sure!'

Adam was a little shocked by his guardian's tone:

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he was particularly pained at his guardian's flippancy in speaking thus of the Catholic religion before a Presbyterian whom he himself hoped sooner or later to convert. It was perplexing to hear the Presbyterian turn on his host to protest: 'I have the greatest admiration for the way in which the Irish, particularly of the lower classes, have been faithful to their pastors.'

'Allow me,' said Father Ignatius, 'it is not to their pastors they have been faithful, but to the tenets of the Church.'

Mr Macarthy smiled deferentially. 'Is it your experience that the people of Ireland know anything about the tenets of the Church?'

Father Ignatius honestly wavered. 'I am not a parish priest,' said he, 'and can produce no evidence, but I believe it to be so.'

'It is my experience,' said Mr Macarthy, 'that the noble-minded take the nobility of other's minds for granted . . .'

Dr Hillingdon-Ryde tapped the table approvingly and Herr Behre followed his example. It occurred to Adam that he might also do so, and he did. He was gratified by his guardian saying something agreeable to Father Ignatius. Mr O'Meagher said that there would be no true nobility in Ireland while Dublin Castle remained. This also seemed to Adam a good point; for Mr Byron O'Toole, he suddenly remembered, had the Castle behind him, and although he did not dislike Mr Byron O'Toole as much as he used to, he felt that Mr O'Toole was not truly noble . . . thence his mind travelled to the portrait of Sir David Byron-Quinn at the National Gallery and he wondered if Sir David had been truly noble . . . was a baronet noble by right of birth? Suddenly he heard himself addressing the Marchesa. 'Was that baronet you painted truly noble, ma'am?' he asked. All eyes were instantly turned on him and he thought

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that all at once would rebuke him, but the Marchesa merely answered, 'Of course he was,' just as if she had expected him to put the question . . . and the general talk went on as before as though nothing had happened. Adam decided that rag-bag or not there was something truly noble about the Marchesa . . . and he decided that she was not ninety . . . it suddenly occurred to him that Barbara Burns was a trifle jealous of the Marchesa . . . why jealous of the Marchesa? . . . without clearly formulating an answer he found himself looking indignantly at Mr Macarthy, and then Mr Macarthy happened to turn and look at him and smiled, and Adam smiled back. . . . It was impossible to be indignant with Mr Macarthy; he was such a simple old gentleman.

He noticed now that when the Marchesa spoke it was always to Mr Macarthy that she addressed herself; and on the rare occasions when she was not speaking she looked at him as if she were thinking of something to say to him. On the other hand, Dr Hillingdon-Ryde and generally Herr Behre addressed themselves to her. Father Ignatius addressed himself to everyone except her, and Mr O'Meagher had the effect of unburdening himself to an audience larger than the room could contain. Were it not for the fact that he spoke every word distinctly, Mr Macarthy might have been talking to himself. Adam felt out of it . . . he did not like feeling out of it, so he sidled round towards the Marchesa until he touched her. The next instant he was whisked up in her bony arms and deposited in her bonier lap while she whispered in his ear, 'Now I know of whom you remind me.'

Adam struggled between two emotions, pride at being signalled for attention by this mysterious gentlewoman and horror at being publicly caressed, more particularly in the presence of Father Ignatius . . . he found himself already asking his conscience whether he should have to confess to Father Ignatius

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what Father Ignatius himself had witnessed: the holy man must have perceived that he had fallen through sheer inadvertency . . . and could a sin be a sin if you had no sinful intention and took no pleasure in it? . . . He tried to remember if the Marchesa was married . . . Marchesa meant marchioness, the wife of a marquis or marchesi, as they called him in Italian . . . therefore she had a husband; he thought it his duty to remind her of him; 'How's the Marchesi,' he asked, but the Marchesa was talking to Mr Macarthy and perhaps accidentally ignored the question. His instinct forbade him to repeat it.

The Marchesa's lap was far from luxurious, and her atmosphere at such close quarters savoured not too delicately of drink and tobacco . . . but Adam was born into a world which reeked of these odours, and her lap was as restful as his ancient refuse heap which served him as bed for the first seven years and more of his life in the corner of the crazy tenement in Count Alley. . . . Also a very highly romantic thought occurred to him, what was it that Hamlet said to Ophelia, and she and he watching a play? 'Lady, shall I lie in your lap?'

He was startled to hear the rebellious daughter of Lord Derrydown answer:

'You're dreaming.' . . . As he was unable to say whether he was dreaming or not, she suggested, 'You're dreaming that I am Ophelia.' Nothing could have been further from Adam's mind, and he was on the verge of laughter when she murmured in his ear as a confidence between them which even Mr Macarthy might not share, 'He once played Hamlet to my Ophelia.' Here was indeed a revelation, for there was no need to tell Adam that he was Sir David Byron-Quinn. . . . But Adam wondered how could a lady and gentleman, and they both of title, noble beings more or less, condescend to take part in a stage play. 'Was the baronet a play-actor?' he whispered.

The Marchesa Startles Father Steele

'Sir David was everything under the sun,' she declared almost loud enough to be heard by Father Ignatius. 'There was nothing that man could not do.'

Adam answered with half-conscious irony, 'He must have been pretty nippy.'

The Marchesa was indulgent, albeit hurt. 'That is hardly the word to use of a great man,' she said, 'and he was one of the greatest of all men.'

'Did you,' said Adam thoughtfully, 'did you think more of him than that chap at Liberty Hall who you said was like Christ?'

'Oh, he was incomparably superior,' said the Marchesa without hesitation, and Adam was puzzled.

'I didn't know there was anyone superior to Christ,' said he.

'Sir David was not, perhaps, superior to Christ as a Christian,' the Marchesa rejoined, with as much thought as her mentality allowed; 'in fact, he didn't call himself a Christian . . . though I'm sure he was a good Catholic in his own way . . . he was always much better than I; but, then, I was never religious . . . at least, not as religion was understood by my mother: she was a very good woman, poor dear, and deeply religious; she and I hated each other . . .'

'How could she hate you if she was religious?' Adam asked.

'Because of my being irreligious, of course,' the Marchesa insisted. 'Religious people always hate irreligious people . . . and it's perfectly right they should. If I ever had a religion I should hate everybody of every other religion. It isn't honest to believe anything yourself and not to hate anybody who believes that what you believe is wrong . . .'

Adam did not clearly follow the Marchesa's argument. 'Did the baronet believe the same as you?' he asked.

'Sometimes he did and sometimes he didn't,' the

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Marchesa answered, adding, after a pause, 'At least, so far as I remember it was like that.'

Adam demanded something definite. 'Did he tell you when he did and didn't?' he said.

Beneath his bones he felt the Marchesa's bones stretch as though she were yawning. 'Did he tell me when he did and didn't . . . did he tell me when he did and didn't? Dear me, my dear child, it's too long ago to remember now.'

But Adam was not to be gainsaid. 'If he was such a remarkable chap as all that,' he suggested, 'why didn't you keep a diary?' At this the Marchesa laughed outright.

'Stephen,' she called to Mr Macarthy, 'Adam wants to know why I didn't keep a diary all about David Byron-Quinn. Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling him?'

Ere Mr Macarthy could answer, Father Ignatius sprang to his feet. 'I must go,' he said hurriedly; 'my duties call me. My duties call me,' he repeated, 'or I would not go.'

Chapter Eight

ADAM LOOKS BACKWARDS

ADAM wondered why Father Ignatius so suddenly departed: or would have wondered had he allowed himself to doubt that saintly man's word. He felt the priest was shocked: but he did not appear to be shocked by him; for Adam, opening the door for him, was patted affectionately on the head and in the gentlest tone admonished to keep on being a good boy. Seemingly the Church did not hold the sitting of a young male in a married woman's lap to be a mortal sin. Perhaps Father Ignatius blamed the Marchesa. That, Adam felt, was not altogether fair: he had wished the Marchesa to take notice of and even, perhaps, to caress him, although he had not been prepared for the form which her endearments had taken. Still, he was quite sure that her caresses were as parental as that of any other elderly person: they had in them nothing reminiscent of Caroline Brady or even Josephine O'Meagher. The lightest touch of Barbara's finger-tip burnt hotter than the Marchesa's kiss.

'I frightened your holy man away,' the Marchesa was saying as Adam re-entered the room.

'Are you proud of that?' Mr Macarthy asked drily.

She shot a tempestuous glance at him, 'Do you think I ought to be ashamed?'

'I think you ought to be ashamed of being silly,' Mr Macarthy answered, and silenced her retort with a wave of his hand: 'We are discussing something more important than even our own love affairs.'

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'I am not sure,' Dr Hillingdon-Ryde argued, 'that there is anything more important than love.'

The Marchesa turned to him gratefully, 'How perfectly ripping of you to say that!'

The minister bowed deferentially, but Mr Macarthy insisted, despite a Hear, Hear! from Mr Behre, echoed by Mr O'Meagher, 'At the present moment we are discussing a Strike which involves our daily bread. I am more interested in my own daily bread than in other persons' daily heart-burns.'

'I protest,' said Dr Hillingdon-Ryde, 'I protest.' But the Marchesa, more sensibly, replied, albeit with a pout, 'You never understood me in the least. But, anyhow, go on with your beastly old Strike.'

'It is not my strike,' Mr Macarthy replied. 'If I had my way there would be no strike. But, since there is one, I'm prepared to stake my all on seeing, firstly, that the men are not beaten, and, secondly, that they are not encouraged to take such risks lightly again.'

'I am entirely with you,' said Dr Ryde. 'I think you are, it may be, right,' declared Herr Behre. But Mr O'Meagher shook his head: 'The Castle is behind all this trouble. It's a trick to get the Irish proletariat into the grip of the English Labour party: so that they'll put their bellies—I beg your pardon, Marchesa—their stomachs . . .'

'Say bellies, and don't be an idiot,' the Marchesa broke in.

' . . . Their . . . their whatever you may call 'ems before their country,' Mr O'Meagher eloquently perorated.

'What is the use of your country if it won't support you?' Mr Macarthy inquired.

'That's a question for a Macarthy to ask an O'Meagher!' protested the Laisridere.

'I should not ask it if it were not,' Mr Macarthy declared.

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'Would you blame Sweet Granuaile . . . ' Mr O'Meagher commenced, but Mr Macarthy cut him short, 'I'd blame the canting jackass who invented her. I've no more patience with silly patriots than I have with silly lovers.'

'Are you sure you were never a silly lover yourself?' the Marchesa blurted indignantly.

'To be sure I was,' Mr Macarthy gently replied, 'And a silly patriot too. And a silly everything under the sun. And have a vast and inexhaustible fund of silliness in me still. . . . But at least I do aim at the mark of common sense, and do not consider it a meritorious deed to appear a bigger fool than I am.'

Mr O'Meagher thundered with a triumphant laugh: 'I'd rather look a bigger fool than I am than be a bigger fool than I look'; but on Mr Macarthy replying that they need not discuss impossibilities, he fell abruptly silent.

Adam looked pityingly at Josephine's father: his naturally bright and jolly face had taken on the gloom of one brooding o'er ancient wrong. At times he threw his host a glance almost of hate; and yet, Adam knew that few loved and admired Mr Macarthy more than did Mr O'Meagher. Adam thought it silly of Mr O'Meagher to behave like that: silly and babyish . . . unworthy of Josephine's father: he was positively making faces at his host, you might almost say putting out his tongue. . . . Now was it to be understood why Mrs O'Meagher, despite her lesser intelligence, laid down the law at Capua Terrace! . . . And yet he, Adam himself, had been making faces at his guardian a little while ago, and only relinquished that occupation when disarmed by a smile. . . . What was it gave this funny old fogey the double power to wound and salve with two successive flashes of his eye. The minister, rising to go, towered above him, massive, ponderously magnificent, a perfect figure of a healthy, amiable, Samson. A few feet

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away was Herr Behre, as tall as Dr Ryde and as straight, but gaunt and haggard, colourless of skin and beard: an ancient Daniel. Both looked towards Mr Macarthy, Adam thought, as he had once seen a pair of Guinness's dray horses look at their driver: as it were affectionately curious of the use to which he would next put their great limbs.

It seemed to Adam, as he gazed at the trio, that he was fonder of Dr Ryde and Herr Behre than he was of Mr Macarthy: just as he was really fonder of the dray horses with their deferential eyes than of their master, who, though he might never whip them, yet had it always in his power to do so. Adam felt that Mr Macarthy, though the mildest spoken person he had ever met, would cut a man in two with a whip if his intellect prompted him to that solution of a problem he thought of matter. . . . On the other hand, he never teased you with a sight of the whip. Indeed, he spoke as though whips had no existence even in his thoughts. In that he differed even from Father Innocent, who palpably dreaded punishment, though more for the sake of others than for himself.

His mind went back to the first day he had sat in that same room with Herr Behre, Mr O'Meagher and their host . . . it was barely six months ago, and yet how completely his world had altered since then . . . the most vital moment of his life had been that when Mr Macarthy had brought him to the window to let the spring sun fall upon his face while he asked him whether he was willing to trust him, he remembered the very words as they looked in each other's eyes: 'Do you feel you could trust me as you trusted Father Innocent?' and how he had recalled his ancient jealousy because he had first seen him in a photograph with Josephine sitting in his lap, and how Mr Macarthy went on because of his silence, 'I don't want you to trust me without question . . . but so

Adam Looks Backwards

far that I can trust you in turn . . . to do nothing . . . behind my back,' and how he, Adam, at long length had answered firmly that he could trust him . . . that he was sure of that . . . yes, and he had been sure of it ever since.

It is possible that, as he walked back with Herr Behre that spring night six months ago from Mountjoy Square, Adam saw his future through too rosy spectacles. It is possible that he thought the new guardianship would weigh lightly on his shoulders, and that at thirteen he would be even freer than he was in the period between his father's death and the rule of Father Muldoon, S.J. It is possible that he fancied himself already a grown man then. If so, he was undeceived; for Mr Macarthy had placed him in leading-strings from which there had been no breaking away. Indeed, it was now, as he believed himself to be on the point of leaving childhood behind, he found himself for the first time consistently treated as a child. Not that Mr Macarthy was wanting in respect for him: if hardly so flattering as Herr Behre and Mr O'Meagher, he was as punctilious and perhaps more urbane than either. But he had perfectly clear-cut ideas as to what Adam ought to do, and, in the absence of equally clear objections on Adam's part, he saw that it was done.

Adam's soul was still, in those early days of his guardianship, hot with indignation from the force of Miss Gannon's assault upon his person. He almost demanded that his guardian should allow him to seek another lodging; but Mr Macarthy merely laughed at the story of the battery, and came round to St George's Place to interview her. . . . Adam was tempted to rebellion to see them part friends. 'That will be all right,' Mr Macarthy said; 'Miss Gannon may have a dirty temper, but it's the cleanest house of its kind I've seen in Dublin; also, she's honest and, within her limitations, well-meaning.'

Adam and Caroline

'D'you mean,' said Adam, 'that I've got to stay there?' His tone was querulous.

'You've got to stay there,' said Mr Macarthy, 'and be grateful to be allowed to stay there.'

Adam frowned. 'If she attacks me again,' he murmured . . .

'She will not attack you again,' said Mr Macarthy, 'unless you deserve it.' There was something in his tone which forbade rejoinder. 'You need not go with her to eleven o'clock mass any more.'

In these unregenerate days Adam brightened at this; for he had taken it to mean that his new guardian considered it unnecessary for a youth of his intellectual attainments to go to mass at all, yet he had a misgiving: 'I don't think Father Innocent would like me to give up going to mass,' he said.

'I'm sure he would not,' was Mr Macarthy's unexpected rejoinder, 'but I don't think he would rather have you go with Miss Gannon to eleven than with me to twelve.' He added that if Adam thought otherwise that would be a matter for his conscience, but he did not advance this objection. He was not overjoyed at the prospect of spending over an hour in church instead of half an hour, but he preferred Mr Macarthy's company to Miss Gannon's. Yet was he mildly surprised at the notion of Mr Macarthy going to mass. Mr Behre never went at all, and Mr O'Meagher only under protest, to please his wife; here was a gentleman as liberal-minded as either yet so pious as to be willing even to sit out a sermon by Father Strong, than which there could be few severer trials of any one's patience.

'Are you fond of sermons, sir?' he asked as they came out of church for the first time together.

'You might as well ask me if I am fond of religion,' said Mr Macarthy with a gentle smile, ignoring his companion's mechanical effort to reach the holy water

Adam Looks Backwards

font. Adam said he had never thought of anyone being fond of religion. 'Come,' said Mr Macarthy, 'you know you have been taught to sing "I love my holy faith."'

Adam was much puzzled. 'I love my holy faith right enough,' said he; 'at least, I suppose I do; but faith is what you believe, isn't it? . . . and religion has nothing to do with that, has it?'

'Hasn't it?' was all that Mr Macarthy had said upon that occasion; but Adam returned to the attack. 'Look here,' said he, 'sermons, anyhow, have nothing to do with what you believe.'

Mr Macarthy answered pensively: 'To tell you what sermons have to do with what I believe would be a very long story. And, to be quite frank with you, I should say they have nothing to do with what most of the people you were brought up among believe. And that is for the simple reason that they believe in nothing . . . at all events, nothing that can be expressed in words.'

'Is there anything,' Adam asked, 'that can't be expressed in words?'

'Ask your own experience,' said Mr Macarthy.

Adam returned that he found it easier to ask him, saying, 'I don't rightly know whether I've ever had any experience.'

And then he remembered that Mr Macarthy had taken him very gently by the arm and said: 'My poor friend, I feared you might have had so much as to be disgusted with the world you know,' and Adam had answered that he supposed it was pretty disgusting, but somehow it had always interested him; and Mr Macarthy had declared, 'That's the answer I like to hear: it shows that your experiences have not been wasted on you.'

And then Adam had asked him, 'What exactly,' repeating the words to emphasise them, 'What exactly is experience?' and Mr Macarthy had replied:

Adam and Caroline

'Experience, according to my lights, is exactly everything.'

Half a year had passed since these things were said, and there was nothing in that half year that did not come back to Adam's mind as he watched, by the glow of the flickering firelight, the faces of Mr Macarthy, Herr Behre, Mr O'Meagher, and, startling to behold, the Marchesa, looking young as when she was Daphne Page.

Chapter Nine

THE MARCHESA IN THE FIRELIGHT

To Adam's mind it was, indeed, startling to see how young the Marchesa della Venasalvatica looked in the flickering firelight; true, all the company looked young in that ruddy light; even the gaunt Herr Behre, with his sweeping beard, a lean Father Christmas was rejuvenated. Mr Macarthy himself seemed almost a boy. But, to Adam, the effect on the woman was the most amazing . . . it was easy enough to understand now why she had had many lovers . . . at least it was easy to understand why many had sought her, but he could not understand how any woman could love more than one. Sorely as he despised his mother, and much as he doubted whether she had loved the man she called his father, he had never thought of the possibility of her loving anyone else . . . possibly because he found it impossible to love her, he had not thought about the subject at all, he had never even wondered why she did not marry O'Toole. . . . He felt he belonged to the world he saw round him in this room, not to the world that lived in Pleasant Street, much less that into which he had been born in Count Alley. And they were quite separate worlds, revolving in orbits absolutely distinct.

He looked hard at the Marchesa; her eyes were fixed on Mr Macarthy, and she was talking to him eagerly. Adam heeded not what she said; he did not see her as what she was but rather as what she had been . . . someone had told him that she had

Adam and Caroline

been to school with Lady Bland . . . that was nonsense: Lady Bland was an old woman of that kind who was never young enough to go to school. He could not conceive of Lady Bland as ever having long hair down her back. Adam associated the idea of youth with the possession of long hair down your back—possibly you might wear it in a plait—but long hair you must have, and, for preference, it should be loose. Caroline Brady's hair had been loose . . . and so had Josephine O'Meagher's; Barbara Burns wore hers short, but she did not put it up, and if she had allowed it to grow he was sure it would have flown down her back in enough volume for her to play Lady Godiva in it. He was tickled by the idea of Barbara Burns playing Lady Godiva and of his playing Peeping Tom . . . no, Peeping Tom was a silly ass, a dirty little snivelling ass; if he wanted to see Lady Godiva he ought to have up and said so . . . what would have happened to Peeping Tom if he had the pluck to say what he wanted . . . he could not remember enough about the atmosphere in which Peeping Tom lived to come to any conclusion in this matter; he could not even remember whether Tom were a real or a fictitious person. Plainly said, he knew even less about Peeping Tom than about Lady Godiva; for her he could visualise quite clearly (assisted by the pictures in the National Gallery), whereas Peeping Tom was just a pair of greedy eyes pitted in a fool's skull.

The Marchesa, in the days when she was Daphne Page, might have been rather like Lady Godiva. After all, she was a lady too, the daughter of a belted earl . . . he knew that earls wore belts, because there was a song about it, (Cook's son, duke's son, son of a belted earl,) the meaning of which was recondite: it referred to something before his time . . . suddenly he heard his voice again, aloud, 'Why didn't you marry the baronet?' he asked.

The Marchesa in the Firelight

Adam felt Mr O'Meagher's warm hand across his mouth, and heard him murmur, 'Whisht, will ye? that's no question to ask a lady'; but the Marchesa broke off in the middle of a sentence and turned to him. 'Did you ask me something, child?' she said.

Adam went over to her. 'I did ask you something,' he answered, 'but I didn't mean to.'

'Didn't mean to?' the Marchesa repeated, almost resentfully.

Adam explained. 'I wanted to know it, but I had no right to ask it—it was a question about yourself.'

'About myself?' said the Marchesa; 'you need never be afraid of asking me any question about myself.'

'Well, it was about yourself and the baronet,' Adam said. The Marchesa laughed a little scornfully. 'Were you afraid to ask me about myself and the baronet? You're as bad as Father Steele; no one need be afraid to ask me about Sir David Byron-Quinn. What was it?'

'Then,' said Adam, point blank, 'why didn't you marry him?'

'Oh, my dear,' said the Marchesa, 'that's a long story why I didn't marry him. There were all sorts of reasons; but one of them was that he was married already.'

'Oh,' said Adam, for some vague reason recoiling, 'was he? Then, of course, you couldn't, could you?'

'No,' said the Marchesa, 'I could not.'

'And,' said Adam, still inquiring, 'did you do that picture of him for his lady wife?'

The Marchesa's answer came sharply: 'I did not; I'd have seen her damned first.'

'Oh,' said Adam, and retired, a little scared, from the circle by the fire. He sat down again in obscurity to dove-tail this fresh piece of knowledge into its proper place in this new world he was building round

Adam and Caroline

him. The Marchesa, seen from where he sat, again looked young, but when he had gone up close to her he had realised what an aged and worn, passion-worn, face she had. When she answered his question as to the baronet's wife, there had been a tigerish snap of the jaws—perhaps it was as well for Sir David Byron-Quinn that he had perished in Kordofan rather than run the risk of coming to an end at her hands. It was easy to imagine the Marchesa killing a man, it was easy to imagine her doing almost anything which Lady Bland would think it wrong to do . . . and yet they had gone to school together and learnt and repeated the same lessons day by day . . . no, one thing already he was old enough to see: the Marchesa had never learnt any lesson, never could learn one while she walked the earth. She was unteachable.

Suddenly, and without giving any reason, she rose to go. The minister asked her which was her way, and she answered vaguely, 'The tram.' He offered to see her to it, and they left together. Mr O'Meagher smiled mildly when they were gone. 'They say Hillingdon-Ryde is a bit of a lad,' said he.

Herr Behre, as no one answered, said, as one called upon to say something, 'Is he, and why not?'

'And why not?' repeated Mr O'Meagher; 'indeed, I think a clergyman of no denomination, not even Presbyterian itself, should be too fond of women.'

'Should anyone be too fond of women?' Mr Macarthy asked cuttingly.

Mr O'Meagher retorted: 'That's a question you might ask yourself; for there's some say you know a little about it.'

'I know a little about a great many things,' Mr Macarthy said calmly; 'unfortunately, it is very little; but I do know that, whatever Ryde may or may not do, he is a gentleman.'

Mr O'Meagher returned, rather in sorrow than in anger, 'Is that to mean I'm not?'

The Marchesa in the Firelight

'Rubbish,' said his host; 'you know it means nothing of the kind, but you're getting no wiser as you grow older.'

Adam thought that Mr O'Meagher was going to return an answer that would make things no better, and perhaps Herr Behre thought so too; for he turned the conversation, addressing himself to Adam, 'I hope that you grow wiser as you grow older.'

Mr O'Meagher snapped out: 'How can he grow wiser and he going to no school?'

'Is schooling necessary to wisdom?' Mr Macarthy asked.

'It's generally considered so,' Mr O'Meagher declared.

'By whom?' asked Mr Macarthy.

'By everybody except yourself,' said Mr O'Meagher.

The fire-light showed Mr Macarthy smiling. 'Prove to me that I am wrong.' But Mr O'Meagher turned away without attempting to do it; he merely said over his shoulder as he looked out into the night that there were some people with whom it was impossible to argue. Behind his back, Mr Macarthy and Herr Behre exchanged smiles.

Suddenly Mr O'Meagher turned to fire the shot: 'Anyhow, Adam ought to be doing something.'

Mr Macarthy said gently: 'He is doing something.'

'What?' snapped Mr O'Meagher.

And, in the same gentle tone, Mr Macarthy answered: 'Unlearning the nonsense your namesake taught him at Belvedere.'

'I never held with the Jesuit teaching,' Mr O'Meagher expostulated. 'I never met a Jesuit that was a true Irishman; at the bottom of their hearts they're Jesuits first and what you like afterwards . . .'

'At the bottom of their hearts,' Mr. Macarthy broke in, 'they are what they like first and Jesuits afterwards.'

Adam and Caroline

'You're cynical about everything,' cried Mr O'Meagher.

'I'm cynical about nothing,' returned Mr Macarthy.

And here Herr Behre said, laying his hand on his host's shoulder, 'No, my friend, I have never known you cynical about anything except yourself.'

'If I was that,' said Mr Macarthy, 'it was only pose.'

Here Mr O'Meagher was understood to say that he hated pose of any kind. At all events, he used many rhetorical phrases which seemed to Adam in their essence to bear this construction, but neither Mr Behre nor Mr Macarthy paid any attention to them: they talked together in low tones by the fire.

Adam felt so sorry for Mr O'Meagher that he joined him at the window, and Mr O'Meagher, realising his propinquity, said, 'You'd like to go to a good Irish school, wouldn't you?'

'No,' said Adam, 'I would not,' and drifted away from him into darkness again.

But Mr O'Meagher stumbled after him, and leaned over him to say, 'And why wouldn't you?' Seeing that Adam was unready with his answer, he pursued his advantage, putting his lips down near Adam's ear, to say in a wheedling voice: 'Would you like Josephine to think of you growing up a dunce?'

This was a horrible thought to Adam: it was bad enough to grow up a dunce, but to imagine Josephine hearing of it and thinking him a dunce was unbearable; had it not been for the vision of Father Tudor, with his maniacal face and ubiquitous ferrule, he would have offered to return to Belvedere then and there. 'I don't want to be a dunce,' said he.

Mr O'Meagher thrust his head yet lower. 'But a dunce you will be if you're not mighty careful, my lad,' he said, almost vindictively; and Adam was conscious for the first time, so far as Mr O'Meagher was concerned, of an aroma associated in his mind

The Marchesa in the Firelight

with Mr O'Toole and others: the aroma of whisky. 'A dunce you'll be,' said Mr O'Meagher.

It was a relief to Adam to hear Mr Macarthy's voice addressing itself sharply to Mr O'Meagher: 'Pull yourself together, and don't talk nonsense.'

Mr O'Meagher stiffened and moved over towards the fire-place. 'You ought not to talk like that to me before the lad,' said he.

Mr Macarthy slightly waved his hand, quite without impatience, and he almost sang the reply: 'What I ought or ought not to do is a question I decide for myself.'

'And what I——' Mr O'Meagher began when he was again cut short.

'What you do so far as Adam is concerned, I decide for you,' said Mr Macarthy with perfect urbanity.

Mr O'Meagher turned, with an air of passionate appeal, to Herr Behre, but the latter answered only: 'Yes, yes, that will be best, that will be best; there will be no mistake then.'

'Well, I'm jiggered,' said Mr O'Meagher; 'I really am.'

'That is interesting,' said Mr Macarthy.

Mr O'Meagher looked at him surprisedly. 'I'm glad you find something interesting about me,' he said; 'and what is it, I'd like to know?'

'Only,' Mr Macarthy declared, 'that, although you tell me Gaelic comes more naturally to you than English, yet in moments of surprise you never express yourself in that language.'

Mr O'Meagher passed his hand mistily across his brow. 'Moments of surprise . . . never expressed myself in that language . . . how d'ye mean?' he murmured.

'I mean,' said Mr Macarthy, quite reasonably, 'Why don't you say "I'm jiggered" in Gaelic, or doesn't the word exist in that language?'

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Mr O'Meagher pulled himself together to say stoutly :
'Every word exists in our beautiful language.'

'What, then, is the Gaelic for "jiggered"?' Mr Macarthy insisted.

Adam thought, by the bright light in Mr O'Meagher's eyes, that he knew the word and could produce it; but after one or two stumbling efforts the light suddenly went out again, and, muttering 'Jiggered if I know,' he took his hat to go. Adam heard him and his host speak in cordial undertones on the staircase, and bid each other no less cordial farewell.

Chapter Ten

GOING TO SCHOOL

WHILE Mr Macarthy was ushering Mr O'Meagher out, Adam seized the opportunity to ask Herr Behre if he had noticed that Mr O'Meagher smelt of whisky, to which the musician answered, curtly for him, 'Why should not the gentleman smell of anything he pleases?'

Adam answered fierily: 'I never said he shouldn't; I said he did.'

'Well,' said Herr Behre, 'and what of it?'

Unable to deny that there was nothing of it, Adam held his peace: he felt that even his long-suffering neighbour at St George's Place was weary of his questions to-day. And yet he meant them all in good faith: he was not, as it appeared to himself, a mere Paul Pry. He did wish to understand the world he lived in, and how could he come to understand it without questioning his friends as to its working . . . he tried again: 'Do you think, Mr Behre,' said he, 'that Mr O'Meagher ought to smell of whisky?'

It was interesting to note that Herr Behre now did what he so often saw Mr Macarthy do: he turned his back on him, and his shoulders rose and fell. For the rest, all he said was 'Donnerwetter!' and at this point Mr Macarthy rejoined them. Apparently he took in the situation at a glance, only, as Adam thought, in an inverted view of it; for he said to Adam: 'So Mr Behre has been cross-examining you.'

Herr Behre swung round on his heel: 'I . . . cross-examine him!'

Adam and Caroline

'No, no,' cried Adam, 'it was me—I mean it was I.'

'You surprise me,' said Mr Macarthy. 'Perhaps you would like to ask me a few questions now?'

Adam smiled gleefully. 'I can always ask you questions,' he said.

Both men laughed, and Herr Behre came over to him: 'And me, too, Adam,' said he; 'you can always ask me questions, if you may not expect such ready answers to them as Mr Macarthy makes.'

Mr Macarthy was suddenly stern. 'One thing, Adam,' said he, 'there is no harm in asking questions, but there is a time for questioning and a time for not questioning. I leave it to you to think out for yourself when each of these alternatives arises.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Adam humbly, and that particular conversation ended there.

The following morning, however, when they were alone, Mr Macarthy reverted to the question of Adam's education. 'In the spring,' said he, 'when I took you away from Belvedere after that unfortunate trouble with Father Tudor, it seemed to me that it was better for your nerves, in fact, for your health generally, that you should have no more schooling in the ordinary sense of the word for some time to come. I may have been right or I may have been wrong in this, but, anyhow, you seem to have benefited by it, and Miss Gannon, who has known you longer than anyone else . . . at any rate, of the people with whom I come in contact, tells me she has never known you look so well. You yourself feel well, do you not?'

Adam's face glowed with gratitude as he panted: 'Sure, I never thought anyone could feel as well as I do.'

Mr Macarthy's lips reflected his smile. 'Come, that's good news,' said he. 'Father Innocent will thank me at least for that . . . but there are other

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things which, perhaps, he will think of greater importance . . .

'My soul,' Adam gravely suggested.

'Your soul,' echoed Mr Macarthy, 'certainly your soul; but that is at the present in charge of Father Ignatius Steele, and I feel no immediate responsibility for it. What I am bothering about now is what we may call your mind.'

'Is the mind different from the soul?' Adam asked.

'I imagine not,' said Mr Macarthy, 'though I would rather you asked Father Ignatius. Perhaps I should have said I am concerned with that part of your mind, or your soul, upon the development of which will depend your immediate future in the world of Dublin, or wherever you may elect to live.'

The last clause brought into Adam's mind a beating of waves on desert islands—visions of the Bristol boat, half-forgotten dream-voyages at Belvedere, and that very baffling thing the chart of the world on Mercator's projection. 'Of course,' said he, 'I might go foreign, mightn't I?'

'You might,' said Mr Macarthy gravely, 'or, for the matter of that, you might stop at home.'

'Or,' cried Adam with a high-pitched voice, 'I might do both.'

'You might,' his guardian again assented, 'but not at once.'

It was a little disappointing to Adam this thought that he might not do all things at once. Even in the wretchedest hours of his life in the foul alley under the shadow of the Pro-Cathedral, he had been buoyed up by a vague notion that all things could be done at once if you only knew how . . . in his dreams, he was positive that he had done all the things he ever heard of in one breath . . . but if Mr Macarthy said all things could not be done at once, they could not, and there was an end to it . . . there, at least, there ought to have been an end to it, but he could not resist the

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temptation to ask his guardian why everything could never be done at once.

'The answer to that,' said Mr Macarthy, 'so far as there is an answer to that, is because of the limitations of place and time.'

Adam was still of an age to be content with answers which explained nothing, and he repeated pensively, 'I see, the limitations of place and time.' He told Attracta that evening that it was useless to try to bring Mr Gannon's dinner and his own at the same hour because of the limitations of place and time, and Attracta was so impressed that she very nearly failed to do so, and, consequently, incurred a scolding from her mistress. Adam heard her trying to explain her intellectual position to the head of the house, who the next morning exhorted him not to be putting nonsense into the girl's head.

'It is not nonsense,' Adam said stoutly. 'Mr Macarthy told me so.'

'Then he ought to be ashamed of himself,' said Miss Gannon.

'Why ought he to be ashamed of himself?' Adam asked, but Miss Gannon fled to escape his fire.

Meanwhile, Mr Macarthy pursued the question of Adam's future. 'We are now in September,' said he, 'and you have had fully six months' holiday. Don't you think it is time that you should be doing some sort of regular work again?'

Adam expressed the more or less pious and not deeply felt conviction that he ought. 'Well, then,' said Mr Macarthy, 'how about going back to Belvedere?'

Adam's heart fell. 'Are you telling me to do that?' he quavered.

'I am telling you nothing,' said Mr Macarthy, 'except that I am bound to advise you that it may be to your material interests to do so.'

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'How d'ye mean?' Adam asked, almost too depressed to feel properly curious.

Mr Macarthy glanced at a paper on his desk and said: 'I mean this. When I took you away from Belvedere Father Muldoon, as I thought you were aware, entered a strong protest against my doing so.'

Adam clenched his fingers testily. 'What right had he to protest?'

'He had this right,' said Mr Macarthy. 'Some person who wishes to remain anonymous had sent him money to be devoted to your education and your welfare generally. The terms of this trust are not very clear to me, and in the absence of anyone who has seen the letters on the subject—I myself have not, nor, perhaps, has anyone except Father Innocent, who left no note of them beyond his general impression as to their contents—it is impossible for me to question Father Muldoon's interpretation of it. He holds that he cannot, and it is quite obvious that he will not, allow the money to be used unless he remains in complete charge of it, which is to say that he remains in complete charge of you so far as your education is concerned. He and I are on sufficiently friendly terms that he accepted my advice about removing you from Belvedere until you had recovered from the effect of Father Tudor's'—here he hesitated for a word—'Father Tudor's mistaken view of you.'

'There was no mistake,' Adam blurted; 'he did it on purpose.'

Mr Macarthy went on smoothly. 'Let us call it then Father Tudor's mistaken purpose . . . anyhow, the long and the short of it is, if you are to benefit from this money, Father Muldoon holds in trust for you, he requires that you should return to Belvedere.'

Adam sank into a chair and suddenly buried his face in his arms. It seemed to him the world was crumbling around him. 'I'd rather die,' he groaned. 'I'd rather die.'

Adam and Caroline

Mr Macarthy's tone remained cold. 'You are young to want to die,' said he. 'But, of course, even at thirteen it is possible to imagine circumstances in which one would be better dead.'

'I'd be much better dead,' Adam answered in a sing-song of self-pity, 'than back at Belvedere with Tudor tormenting the life out of me.'

Mr Macarthy laid his hand on his shoulder. 'I agree with you there,' said he. 'But some of us are not entirely without influence, and I think it might be possible for you to go back to Belvedere without having much to fear from Father Tudor. At all events I could promise you that at the first sign of his attempting to lay hand on you you could march out of class then and there without anyone daring to stop you.'

For an instant Adam had a darkling vision of his defying Father Tudor with his fingers to his nose, but his stomach sickened even at this view of the good priest, and he shook his head. 'I don't want to go back to Belvedere,' said he. 'I loved it once, but Tudor's made me hate it for ever and ever.'

'But supposing your whole future may depend on your pleasing Father Muldoon in this,' Mr Macarthy urged. 'Suppose on the one hand it's a question of your meeting his views and being brought up in . . . in what he and your godfather Mr O'Toole would call a gentlemanly way and your being thrown on the streets to earn your own livelihood again, which would you deliberately prefer?'

Adam sprang up and faced his guardian with a crash of his little fist upon the table. 'The streets any day,' he cried. Mr Macarthy held out his hand. 'That's right,' he said, 'and so would I. The streets any day, by God.' He took a turn up and down the room, then suddenly caught Adam and swung him up in his arms and laughed at him. 'Good man,' said he, 'the streets any day.' Then he sat down with

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Adam in his lap. 'It won't be the streets while I live,' said he. Adam began to feel quite fond of Mr Macarthy.

He tried to think of something nice to say to him. 'It was very kind of you to give me that bicycle,' he said.

'Was it?' said Mr Macarthy, 'and to let you strain your little entrails out trying to ride it; I suppose that was very kind of me, too?'

'I was thinking of the second bicycle more than the first,' said Adam frankly, and was a little surprised that Mr Macarthy roared with laughter, but seeing that he did so, thought it polite to imitate him, and so they both laughed until the tears ran down their cheeks; but in his heart Adam saw nothing at all amusing in straining his inside from falling off a bicycle. His laughter was really a rejoicing at the thought that for sure now he need never go back to Belvedere.

'Tell me,' said Mr Macarthy at last, 'what really you would like to do.'

Adam's eyes swept the walls for inspiration. 'What were you doing at my age?' he asked.

'At your age,' said Mr Macarthy, 'I was at Clongowes . . . you know Clongowes?'

Adam nodded. 'Clongowes Wood, the boarding-school in Kildare.' His face fell. 'Father Tudor came from there.'

'Well, anyhow he's not there now,' Mr Macarthy pointed out, 'so would you like to try how that would agree with you?'

Adam had a happy inspiration. 'Old Muldoon would think that as good as going to Belvedere?' he asked.

'I daresay he might,' Mr Macarthy said, 'if we put it to him in the right spirit.'

Adam somewhat wistfully sought still a loop-hole of escape from doing what he thought Mr Macarthy

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wished him to do. 'D'ye think Mr O'Meagher would approve?' he asked.

Mr Macarthy's eyes had what seemed to Adam a mischievous look. 'Why should he not approve?' he said. 'At all events you heard him the other day very strongly disapprove of your doing nothing . . . Mind you, I don't say that you're doing nothing, but that is how your present existence appears to Mr O'Meagher, who is, after all, in his own opinion at all events, as good a judge of boys as I am.'

Adam shifted from one leg to the other. 'I don't want to go to Clongowes unless you want me to,' he said, and seeing that his guardian was slow to answer pushed what he thought to be his advantage. 'You don't want me to go there, do you?'

Mr Macarthy looked him straight in the face. 'Adam,' said he, 'I've always tried to be frank with you; I really don't know whether I want you to go or not. If I were to consider myself alone and had complete faith in my own ideas—to say nothing of my being sufficiently well off to be able to carry them to their logical conclusion—I am under the impression that I would risk keeping you with me, but I feel myself bound in honour to try to meet Father Muldoon's views in every way I can. Also as I tell you, it is very much in your own interest that you should do the same. Now if I were in your position I would try Clongowes . . .'

'I don't mind trying it,' Adam blurted.

'Very good, then,' said Mr Macarthy, 'try it. That is all I ask; it is quite possible that you may be happy there, and if you are everyone will be pleased: no one, I give you my word of honour, can be more pleased than I . . . Try it for one term anyhow, the new one is beginning now and three months brings you to Christmas, that term you must stick if you go there at all, but if when I see you at Christmas you can give me any good and honest reason for not going

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back, then I promise you that whether Father Muldoon, or for the matter of that anyone else, finds it a sufficient reason or otherwise, back you shall not go.' He took a turn up and down the room, and then paused again before the boy. 'Come, how's that for a bargain between us?'

Adam seized the proffered hand. 'I'll do anything on earth you like,' said he, and added almost in a whisper, 'I've no right to bargain with the like of you.'

So it was arranged that to Clongowes Adam should go. Father Ignatius Steele blessed the arrangement and even Father Muldoon himself appeared to commend it. Mr O'Meagher was particularly gracious and took to himself no little credit for the advice upon which he believed Mr Macarthy to be acting. For the rest he reminded Adam more than once that at Clongowes he would have every opportunity of learning Gaelic. 'Sure there are men there speak it like natives,' he declared.

Adam looked at him surprisedly. 'Do natives speak Gaelic?' he asked.

Mr O'Meagher tied himself up in an effort to answer this question: so Mr Macarthy came to the rescue: 'The natives of Ireland commonly speak English,' he said.

'More shame to them!' roared Mr O'Meagher, but did not show cause.

On the whole going to Clongowes was capital fun; for what seemed to Adam a most elaborate trousseau had to be purchased, and he had the town-bred boy's instinctive joy in shopping. A less agreeable item was going to say farewell to his mother at 7 Pleasant Street. She received him in state in a room all red paper and queer gim-cracks. The interview was very short; for Mr O'Toole was there, too, seeing her on business. When Mr O'Toole came, so far as Adam remembered, he always came on business; but what

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the business was never appeared. Mrs Macfadden gave him five shillings for himself and a kiss strongly flavoured with Guinness's stout. 'Never forget to say your prayers,' she admonished him, 'particularly to the saints. St Kevin of Glendalough was a lovely saint. I'd pray to him if I were you every morning, noon and night, the more the merrier.'

His godfather gave him half a sovereign. 'Always let on to be a gentleman,' said he, 'and if anyone says you're not kick the tripes out of him.'

Chapter Eleven

CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE

To say good-bye to his mother and his peerless godfather was one thing, but to say farewell to Herr Behre and to Mr Macarthy and to Attracta and perhaps above all to the bull's-eye lantern through whose intermediary he had made the acquaintance of the poets and notably Mr Keats, was another. He had thought of taking the bull's-eye lantern with him, but all his guardians agreed in saying that to do so would be to risk its confiscation by the Society of Jesus. Herr Behre had at first argued that it was reasonable for a boy to have a bull's-eye lantern and a gross interference with the rights of the subject to forbid a schoolboy to carry one about with him. But Mr Macarthy said that the protection of the rights of the subject had never been a plank in the Jesuit platform, and indeed since their suspected association with the frustrated exploit of Mr Guido Fawkes the Jesuits had been tetchy on the subject of such methods of illumination. Adam did not fully perceive the drift of this argument, but allowed himself to be persuaded to leave the lantern behind. He tenderly folded it in many copies of the *Irish Homestead*, full of pathetic recollections of a certain goose, and brown paper and string withal, and having sealed the whole with a stick of sealing-wax costing rather more than the lantern, he committed the parcel to the care of Attracta with assurance that she would end her days in misery and probably spend eternity in the least agreeable surroundings if she lost it or attempted to ascertain its contents.

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Where he expected Attracta to conceal it from the morally sleepless eyes of Miss Gannon, he had not the time to think, nor did Attracta think about it in her romantic desire to have a secret with the young Master, as she now called him, that none but the two of them should share. It is probable that while Adam was at school that parcel performed a steeple-chase through the house with such rapidity that even Miss Gannon's gaze failed to keep pace with it. It were as indelicate to pursue Attracta's stratagems in defence of the young Master's property as those of Miss Flora Macdonald in the preservation of the person of the Young Pretender: waking or sleeping it was seldom far from her.

But meanwhile Adam started on his journey into the unknown. Mr Macarthy himself drove him on a car to Kingsbridge station, and about five o'clock of a chilly autumn afternoon handed him over to the care of a tall and amiable young Jesuit with longish hair whom Adam had never seen before; his name was Mr Beam, and he was in charge of a party of boys mostly of Adam's age or a little older, who swarmed in and out of certain second-class carriages reserved for their accommodation. Adam quite frankly clung to Mr Macarthy when the moment came for them to part, and he was conscious of a vaguely luxurious notion that Mr Macarthy clung to him. He thought there was a new kindness in his guardian's voice as he whispered in his ear, 'There, there, old fellow, don't cry; that will be bad for both of us and a bad beginning for your school days . . . you can see Beam's a decent fellow and he'll look after you . . . he's Third Line Prefect, so you'll be under him . . . good-bye,' then there was just a blur, a slamming of doors, a whistling, and the train was off.

The last journey Adam had taken by train was from Sandycove to Westland Row, after his inglorious collapse from his bicycle near Glasthule Church. He

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reflected that the only railway he had ever travelled on was the South Eastern, commonly called the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford. And by that he had never gone farther than Bray, only thirteen miles or so. Now he was going to Sallins, which was five miles more: he felt that as a traveller he was getting on. He perceived at once that the train he was in now ran much more softly than any he had been in before; it almost seemed to glide along, and even going over points you only just felt it. The Southern and Western was the great line surely, but he was not sure that he did not miss a little that galloping feeling you had on the Wicklow and Wexford; you always had it: no matter how slow you went, the train always bumped as if it were going quite fast . . . that was a jolly sort of feeling, to bump. Of course, you could bump a bit too much, like on a car in Brunswick Street . . .

Such were his thoughts when he was conscious of the green eyes of a lively-looking, though rather pale and sickly, boy in a Norfolk jacket and long trousers, and a very deep Eton collar round his neck, staring at him with a sort of contempt. This boy said: 'A penny for your thoughts.'

'I don't want a penny,' Adam answered, 'for I have a lot of money in my pocket . . .'

'How much?' asked the other boy promptly.

Adam began to reckon. 'My mother gave me five bob, and Mr O'Toole gave me ten, and . . .'

'Who's Mr O'Toole?' asked the other boy.

'Mr O'Toole is my godfather,' said Adam submissively.

'How does he come to be your godfather?' the other boy asked.

'I suppose he was asked to be,' said Adam thoughtfully.

'Who asked him?' insisted the other.

Adam again took thought. 'I dare say it might have been my mother.'

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'Why didn't your father ask him?'

Adam felt himself thrown on his defence. 'How do you know he didn't ask him?' he returned.

But the other maintained his attitude. 'How do you know he did?'

'I never said he did,' said Adam; 'I only said it wasn't for anyone to say he didn't.'

'Don't be cheeky,' said the other boy.

'I'm not cheeky,' said Adam.

'You are.'

'I'm not.'

'I say you are.'

For a moment Adam was inclined to deal severely with his interlocutor, but he swallowed the desire and held his peace. The other boy looked round the compartment to make sure they were not observed, and then said in a low voice, 'I say you are cheeky,' and then, as Adam still held his peace, he repeated, 'I'll teach you to be cheeky.'

Adam felt that the enemy had left a pretty hole in his armour. 'I dare say you could teach me a lot I don't want to learn,' he said, with a tolerable imitation of the manner of Mr Macarthy. The next instant he was conscious of a vicious kick on his ankle.

'I'll teach you . . .' began his new acquaintance, but his speech ended in a shriek; for Adam had no sooner felt the toe of his tormentor's left foot touch his right ankle than he ground down his own left heel on the other's right toe, and seemed to that gentleman to clamp it to the floor of the carriage.

'Go on teaching me,' said Adam kindly.

'Pax,' said the other; 'oh, pax!'

Adam's smile had the grimness of youth in pain, and his gentle tone was grimmer still. 'You began it,' said he; 'it's for me to say when it'll end.'

'I didn't begin anything,' said the other. 'Let me go, I tell you, you young brute.'

'Go on teaching me,' said Adam again.

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The other now was sobbing. 'If you don't let me go I'll tell Mr Beam,' said he.

'What'll you tell him?' asked Adam derisively. 'That I trod on your toe, eh?'

'I'll tell him, I'll tell him,' babbled the other.

Adam cut him short: 'If you tell him anything more than that you'll tell him a lie,' said he; 'but you may tell him what you like for all I care—only keep your dirty feet to yourself in the future'; and with that he released him.

For the rest of the journey the youth in the Eton collar swore strange oaths of grief and pain, and threatened vengeance into the depth of his Norfolk jacket; but Adam took no further notice of him, devoting himself entirely to the attempt to discover, by some anticipated change in the landscape and fauna, where the county of Dublin ended and that of Kildare commenced. Then, suddenly, they were at their journey's end, without his solving this problem.

Adam clambered out with his impedimenta, which, chosen for him by Mr Macarthy, were of a nature for a boy to handle; then he saw the other boy struggling with a sort of chest which had been hidden under the seat, and offered him a hand with it.

'I don't want your help,' he grumbled, but, nevertheless, availed himself of it. Then, again, followed a blur, and the next thing Adam knew was that he was trying to climb up on a car, and that his right leg refused to help him. His ankle had already caused him to shamble from the carriage to the road outside the station, but there were cheery hands ready to help him, and someone swung him up and, seeing him in pain, gave him the more comfortable seat to ride on. His train companion had disappeared, and his immediate neighbour now was a more attractive looking boy, with fair hair and a rather girlish face, a couple of years older than himself.

'If you're not used to car driving,' said this boy,

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with a soft accent, strange to Adam's ears and a pleasant undulating roll which gave the word 'car' an indefinite number of syllables—'if you're not used to car driving you had better hold on tight, for an outside car on a country road is queer driving with the night falling, and you never know when a wheel may rock over a ditch if the driver is not as teetotal as some.'

'I'm not afraid of falling off,' said Adam stoutly, 'but I'll hold on if you tell me to.'

But, as a matter of fact, the night was not yet falling, and the sun was barely sunk by the time the train of cars had covered the few miles of autumn-decked roadway between Sallins station and the entrance to the school avenue. Adam opened his lungs to the country smells, of which the dominant note was peat smoke. Greatly he enjoyed the ride, and would have thought it too short but that the desire, the greatest desire of youth, the satisfaction of curiosity, added many fanciful furlongs to each mile.

Bowling up the drive he glimpsed a castle, such a castle as you see in a pasteboard theatre, and believed himself in the presence of immemorial antiquity. 'I suppose now,' he said to his neighbour, 'Clongowes will be a thousand years old at least?'

'Hardly that,' said the other, without show of erudition, 'but I dare say it might be a hundred, or even more.' He added, thoughtfully: 'Daniel O'Connell sent his sons to Clongowes.'

'But, sure, Daniel O'Connell himself only died about the time Herr Behre was born,' Adam cried, disappointed that the school should be such a comparative novelty.

'I don't know when Herr Behre was born,' the other simply replied, 'but I know Daniel O'Connell died before I was born. And anything that happened before you were born always seems a long time off, doesn't it?'

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Adam's voice piped sympathetically: 'Doesn't it seem an awful long time? I used to think that nothing had happened before I was born.'

'So used I,' said the other; 'but that's all nonsense, of course, for History happened and all that.'

Adam advanced philosophically the proposition: 'Some say History isn't true.'

His new friend looked at him with lovable eyes. 'I dare say English History isn't true,' said he, 'but Irish History is, of course.'

'Of course it is,' said Adam doubtfully, adding: 'I never read any . . . except for fun.'

'Shame on you,' cried the other, half seriously. 'The idea of reading the History of Ireland for fun! There's no fun about the History of Ireland, I can tell you.'

Adam shook his head knowingly. 'Mr Macarthy says there's fun about everything if you look at it in the right spirit.'

'What Macarthy is that?' the friendly boy asked him, and then, without waiting for an answer, cried: 'Here we are!'

There was a blur again, a blur of smoking horses after the sharp drive, grey light around outside, and a big door open, with light inside, against which stood black-frocked men with clean-shaven faces and birettas on their heads, reminding him of the shadows of crown loaves, and people were shaking his hands, and a fatherly voice was saying, 'Welcome to Clongowes!'

Chapter Twelve

ADAM IS BIDDEN TO KEEP THE FAITH

FEW boys forget their first night at a boarding-school, and Adam's memory was of a kind to register even less notable events. More than to most of them was it strange to him to be, as it were, afloat in a sea of boys: so far he had lived in a world of men; for the youngsters with whom he had rubbed shoulders when he sold his papers outside the Gresham Hotel and in Stephen's Green verily did not belong to the world of children, the world of nurseries and Father Christmas. Perhaps even to-day there are few children permitted to know childhood in families of a rank far below the middle class. At all events, in Adam's time there were few children compared with the number of embryo wage-earners, or, as the stocky man with the black moustache whom Adam had seen Mr Macarthy salute on the steps of Liberty Hall called them, wage-slaves.

Perhaps it was Father Ignatius Steele's sentimental, as some thought, appeal for the right of children to be children, that first endeared him to Adam. He somehow suspected that Father Muldoon held that only souls of some social position were really worth the trouble of saving, at all events by his reverence. And Adam had no reason to suppose that Father Muldoon was worldlier than other priests, though he wore a markedly shinier tall hat. Mr O'Toole himself had praised the gloss of Father Muldoon's tall hat, and Mr O'Toole, whatever his foibles, was a stern critic of male apparel: Adam remembered

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the days when his costume was ragged to the verge of indelicacy, but never had he worn a coat which had not at some period, however remote, been the last thing in fashion.

Somehow Adam's thoughts were full of Mr O'Toole as he lay down to rest that first night in his cubicle at Clongowes. His mind recurred to the conversation with the boy who had attacked him in the train: the boy who had asked him who was Mr O'Toole . . . why should people ask him who was Mr O'Toole? . . . and why was it that he did not really properly know the answer to this question? . . . Who was Mr O'Toole? . . . His godfather? . . . Why was he his godfather? Because his mother wished it. And why did his mother wish it? He scratched his head. Some day he must ask Mr Macarthy why his mother wished Mr O'Toole to be his godfather . . . and, now he came to think of it, Mr O'Toole was supposed to be a sort of guardian to him too, but he never interfered with what Mr Macarthy did. . . Nobody interfered with what Mr Macarthy did. . . . Mr O'Meagher seemed wanting to interfere, but nothing came of it all. . . . But, then, Mr O'Meagher was not a strong man, whereas Mr O'Toole, he felt in some mysterious and sinister way, was a very strong man indeed. . . . Perhaps that was because he had the Castle behind him. . . . Mr O'Meagher had the disadvantage of having the Castle against him. . . . Mr Macarthy had the Castle . . . was it for or against him? Adam could not make out which. When Mr Macarthy mentioned the Castle he did so as carelessly as if it were a public lavatory: something that you might use or you might not, but hardly the sort of place where a gentleman would like to be seen employed . . . it must be a very queer place, the Castle; for he remembered now that Mr O'Toole always spoke of his friends employed there as 'gentlemen from the Castle' . . . so Mr Macarthy and Mr O'Toole held

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different opinions as to what a gentleman was, or, at all events, what a gentleman ought to do . . . it was a very queer world. How could you be a gentleman when no two people agreed as to what a gentleman was? He remembered telling Father Innocent he was a gentleman and Father Innocent's annoyance at the suggestion. . . . Now, was Father Innocent annoyed because he really was a gentleman or because he really was not? . . . Anyhow, Mr O'Toole's instructions were if anyone said he was not a gentleman to perform a violent operation on him with his boots . . . but he didn't think it worth making a fuss about whether people questioned his gentility or not.

The bed he was lying in was very hard, not that he had been accustomed to lying soft, even in the comparative luxury of St George's Place, but the flock on which he was lying now was, as it were, monastically hard, a sort of premonition of the hard bed the Christian was bound to make for himself wished he ever to take his ease on the heavenly throne. . . . Adam turned from side to side, thinking the heavenly throne uncommonly far away, and wondering whether it was really worth while taking a lot of trouble to be an angel. Somehow angels had lost any definition of outline since Father Innocent died; up to then he had seen them as beautiful and satisfying to the eye, and no less objective in their bodily charm than the three heavenly visitors who had caused such a sensation when they visited the cities of the plain . . . not that Adam knew much about that wonderful visit or the tribulation that it had cost a worthy and far from proud patriarch. That is the disadvantage of being a little Catholic, that you are encouraged to love your holy faith but not to make too intimate an acquaintance with it. Adam had never conceived of any angel as being of the male sex, with the possible exception of himself . . . of course, there was Father Innocent, but somehow

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even Father Innocent did not readily lend himself to the essential scheme of decoration; he could not think of Father Innocent in heaven wearing any costume more fanciful than that which he wore at the altar, and had a horrid suspicion that if the sweet little saint had been given wings he would at once have toppled on his nose . . . yet a Heaven without Father Innocent, transfigured or plain, would have been emptier to Adam than a heaven without God.

Adam never wanted to join Father Innocent in heaven, though often he lay awake at night longing with a heart-breaking passion for him to return to earth . . . in the day-time he often forgot him, but surely as he woke in the night his first thought was of him, and that he was dead, never to be seen again, and his tears would wet his pillow; for Adam felt that Father Innocent's was the kingdom of heaven, while his will was to inherit the earth, and he knew that to no man was given a place in both these realms. Even Mr Macarthy strongly insisted, as strongly as did Father Steele himself, that no man could worship God and Mammon too. To be sure, Adam was not conscious of worshipping Mammon, but in his heart he knew that he did not worship God. He never at any time had worshipped God, though he had passionate moments when he thought of God's mother and God's son . . . how did God's mother become the mother of His son? That sounded like a question in the Catechism, but he did not remember any answer to it. In the day-time a question like that seemed of no importance, but at night. . . . Why did questions that seemed so trifling in the day-time loom so large at night? . . . Of course, God the Father and God the Son were the same person . . . but, then, if they were, what was the use . . . and the Holy Ghost? Where, exactly, did He come in? . . . Did the Blessed Virgin marry them all, and Joseph too? . . . Perhaps there was someone at Clongowes

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who could tell him that. The first man who shook hands with him at the door looked very clever—some one said he was Father Bernard James; on the prospectus of the school, Father Bernard James was named as spiritual director; so he ought to be able to tell him all about the Blessed Virgin and which of the Blessed Trinity she really married. . . . But was she really married? The Catechism said nothing about her marrying anyone but Joseph: it was all very vague. . . . Now, in the Roman Mythology, they told you definitely what happened, as when Jupiter turned himself into a bull or a swan or some other old thing when he wanted to get married. . . . But then, of course, the ancient gods got married as often as they liked, the modern Christian God could only get married once. For him to have had more wives than one would never have done at all. . . . It was a queer thing that the three Divine Persons should have had only one woman between them, and that she should have had all the three of them, and Joseph as well. . . . Lady Bland had said that his mother was like the Blessed Virgin . . . could Lady Bland have been right after all? . . . The late Mr Macfadden had not been at all like Joseph. . . . Nor was Mr O'Toole at all like . . . Like who? What nonsense was he thinking now. . . . After all, that bed was not so hard that he could not go to sleep on it, still wondering whether Mr O'Toole was or was not like some historical person, he could not quite remember whom; but, anyhow, he dreamt of Mr O'Toole with white wings and a wand in his hand, and was presently wakened by the ringing of the Angelus.

He rubbed his eyes and looked around, wondering for the moment where he was; the dusky light of a September morning was breaking in the dormitory, notably in a distraught chequer on the ceiling: that patch of the ceiling visible above the white curtain that screened off his partition from the gangway . . .

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the bed was very hard, but not so hard that he was unprepared to go again to sleep upon it. . . . From the partitions round him came gentle snorts and murmurs, the rippings of adolescent slumber on the shores of day: but not only he was awake; for from one partition came a rattle of crockery, and from another the winding of an immeasurable watch-spring, in another someone, possibly still asleep, was saying his prayers; Adam pricked his ears to listen to it . . . yes, it was the prayer of St Bernard . . . he once had fallen asleep saying the prayer of St Bernard, his invisible neighbour promised to wake up saying it . . . it was a queer thing to say prayers in your sleep . . . did prayers said in your sleep count? Or were they just wasted breath. . . . Perhaps, if prayers said in your sleep counted, you could train yourself to say them all the time you were asleep: that would be a great saving. . . . He was not quite sure what it would save, but it seemed clear that it must save something. . . . But, then, prayers were no good without intention, and how far was it possible to have intention in your sleep? . . . On the whole, it seemed unlikely that prayers said in your sleep received equally high marks in heaven with those said when you were awake. . . . He was dozing off when an electric bell buzzed fiercely, and a moment later he heard a door open and a swish of priestly garments moving down the room, while a voice said sharply: 'Now, boys, time to get up!'

It required no great effort that morning for Adam definitely to shake off slumber and swing himself out of bed. He had already learnt that there was no question of having a morning tub or any hot water; it was no joke washing the whole of his person in that narrow space between the partition wall and the bed, but he managed it somehow by instalments, though he splashed the whole place with water when he sat in his basin; the water coursing along the floor into

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the gangway drew the dormitory prefect's attention, and Adam, sitting in his little shirt on the bed, with his feet in the basin, was roused by the startled question: 'Have you had an accident?': through round spectacles the no less startled infantile eyes of the prefect gazed on him, immediately to disappear again with a murmured 'Oh! that's all right, that's all right, I thought you'd had an accident, I didn't know you were washing, I thought you'd had an accident.' The voice sped off repeating as it went, 'I didn't know you were washing, I thought you'd had an accident, I didn't know you were washing, that's all right, I didn't know you were washing, that's all right, I thought—' and so deceased. Adam was still brushing his teeth when the voice came again: 'Hurry up, my boy, hurry up! No time to lose, you'll be late for chapel.'

Adam protested respectfully: 'I'm brushing my teeth, sir,' and the voice answered, 'Never mind that now, you'll be late for chapel.' And in effect Adam was the last, or one of the last, of a queue of tousled little boys clattering downstairs and along an endless corridor into the chapel, where a voice was already saying: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' Which set Adam thinking at once upon the question of Mr O'Toole.

Nevertheless, he made his responses with proper energy and impressed the prefect in charge as being a pious as well as an exceptionally tidy little boy. And not only was the prefect impressed by him, particularly by his clean and rather pretty colour as he came panting to his place, but he was unconscious of being noticed favourably or otherwise: he was preoccupied with alternate thoughts about his relationship to Mr O'Toole and the hope that he would be given tea for breakfast that would be less undrinkable than that which had almost turned his stomach on his arrival the night before.

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Alas, the tea at breakfast seemed almost worse than he had drunk the night before; but his neighbour, a red-haired boy from Kerry, insisted that it could not be worse. 'For sure,' said he, 'it's the same mucky old tea over again, the same as you had last night, only maybe with more jollop in it.'

Adam wondered what 'jollop' was, but his instinct told him that it would be indelicate to inquire. 'It makes me sick, the taste of it,' said he.

The other boy leered at him mockingly. 'You've a mighty fine stomach,' said he, 'for I never heard of jollop making anyone sick yet. . . . Sure isn't it there to keep you from being sick?'

'Is it?' said Adam politely. 'I didn't know.'

His neighbour called down the table, 'Say, you fellows, here's a beggar didn't know what jollop was for.'

Some boys seemed amused by this and others not. Adam felt that he preferred the boys who did not. He looked about the room wishing he could catch sight of the boy who had driven up from the station with him the night before, but he was not visible . . . he tried to discover from his neighbours who he was, but not being able to give him a name or describe him in terms which called up any image to their inattentive minds, he got no help from them. At his own table, but not near him, sat the boy who had assailed him in the train; Adam had seen him also about the passages and was under the impression that he occupied one of the cubicles in his dormitory, but he vouchsafed no more than a surly half-nod of recognition; on the other hand, Adam saw from the glances of his neighbours that his tongue had not been silent on the subject of their meeting. Whatever he may have said on that subject no one since then had offered to bully him . . . the worst thing that had happened at Clongowes so far was the tea; but there was no gainsaying that was a very evil thing indeed. After breakfast

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Adam's impressions began to blur again; there was a good deal of indeterminate hurrying about up corridors and down corridors, into class-rooms and out of class-rooms, into the great study over the refectory and out of it again, and down to the box-room to unpack things and so on; and a great deal of ringing of the big bell at the angle of the two great corridors and an hour or so in the playground which bored him stiff, for he was quite without the art of playing with other boys and without the desire to acquire it. What he would have liked to do was to take out his bicycle on the cinder-path, he had never ridden a bicycle on a cinder-path yet, but he felt that etiquette if nothing else forbade a new boy to do this at once.

As a set-off against this, Mr Beam, finding him standing alone near the cricket-patch on the Third Line playing-ground, gave him a few kind words in the intervals of keeping the peace among his brawnier charges, and as he walked back alone from the playground a kindly hand was laid on his shoulder from behind and he found himself looking up in the face of Father Bernard James.

'Adam, my dear boy,' said he, 'tell me, are you happy at Clongowes?'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam mechanically, adding with caution: 'I mean, sir, I hope to be.'

Father James smiled genially. 'That is right,' said he, 'if you hope to be happy you will be happy . . . always provided that you hope in the right spirit . . . and I know you have the right spirit.'

'How do you know, sir?' Adam asked.

Father James laughed outright, though very softly and as it were roundly, 'God bless you my dear boy, we know all about you here,' and then gravely, making the sign of the cross upon his forehead, he added, 'Keep the faith, Adam Macfadden.'

Chapter Thirteen

FATHER CLARE'S SURPRISING OBSERVATION

YES, Adam's hope that he should be happy at Clongowes seemed quite likely of fulfilment. To begin with, everyone he met, at all events among those in authority, spoke to him as if their intentions towards him were at least kindly; and Adam, even more than other boys, was susceptible to the veriest implication of kindness. He was willing to believe that he was being treated well even when he was not. At Clongowes none apparently sought to treat him ill: Mr Beam, the Third Line Prefect, was notably kind, being, indeed, kind to all but a few obviously provocative boys. . . . Adam thought to some he was foolishly kind; for many who showed the Prefect a servile face mocked at him and his slightly finicking way behind his back. Father Bernard James, too, in an older and more sophisticated manner, the fine shades of which Adam was yet too young to analyse, showed him a winning amiability.

Less attractive in person, but perhaps most appreciative of all, was Father Clare, the master of the class in which Adam was placed, confessedly as an experiment: he was young for Father Clare's Class, but Father Clare seemed anxious to keep him in it if he himself did not shirk the work. A short man and stout was Father Clare: he looked to Adam to bear a refined and spiritualised resemblance to Lady Bland's butler . . . even he who had introduced him to the dread luxury of a bath in her ladyship's house in Fitzwilliam Square, in those distant days when he was still a little

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ragamuffin, dreading soap and its smell rather worse than the brimstone which his father had prophesied would make an end of Mr O'Toole. . . . Adam was a little shocked to know that this bright and engaging little priest was known to his pupils, simply by reason of his hooked nose and rounded tummy, as 'The Toucan.' . . . True, Adam did not know what a toucan was, but he judged from a drawing that appeared one day on the blackboard ere Father Clare entered the classroom that it was some absurd kind of bird . . . reference to the natural history book in the Third Line library confirmed this impression. So much so that Adam regretted consulting it; for the picture of the toucan there so closely resembled Father Clare in certain aspects at his less dignified moments that Adam himself, grateful as he was to him, and conscious of his essential goodness underlying his grotesqueness, dared not always look him in the face. . . . Making his first confession to Father Bernard James, Adam expressed his contrition for his inability to refrain from laughing at Father Clare; but even saintly Father James did not appear to think that it greatly mattered whether one laughed at Father Clare or not.

Father Clare himself was quite unconscious of any lack of respect on Adam's part, and showed as real a desire to help him in his work and to further his education within his own limitations as had Father Strong or anyone else at Belvedere. Adam found himself once again really interested in Latin and eager to avail himself of his new master's good offices in introducing him to Greek. . . . English came to him so naturally that he could keep his place in the class at that without consciously studying it . . . the question now arose: should he study Gaelic? . . . Happy thought! He would ask Father Clare, and accept his decision.

'Gaelic,' said Father Clare, 'Gaelic! You are good enough to ask me whether I think you ought to devote

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your attention to the study of Gaelic. Well, well, Gaelic—Ha! hum! the question is whether I should advise you to study Gaelic or not. . . . Am I right in saying that that is the case?’

Adam answered very respectfully: ‘Yes, sir, it is,’ though he was suffering inwardly from a desire to grimace or worse over Father Clare’s immediate and pressing effort, as it were, to realise the picture of the toucan in the natural history book, a resemblance that was made all the more absurd because Father Clare happened to be wearing his biretta, a head-dress which threw up into preposterous relief the more toucanesque of his features. The conversation took place, not in the class-room, but in the corridor between the school house and the old building, where they had happened to meet outside the minister’s door; between that and the door by the refectory, up and down the passage, his master marched him while they discussed the subject; and Adam could not help noticing that, keeping step with the plump priest, his young feet rebelliously outpaced the man’s: even in the matter of his legs poor Father Clare resembled a toucan.

But the mentality behind the ludicrous mouth was not the dullest Adam encountered on his way through the world. Father Clare was an educationalist not merely by accident but by temperament: he loved to learn, and even to impart learning, despite the dire physical handicap under which he laboured, to all he could persuade to listen to him. For Adam’s hearing and heeding little brain he had conceived an almost passionate affection. While he walked apparently so foolishly up and down, repeating in his chattering tone, ‘Gaelic: is that the question?’ in his heart he was praying that he might advise this young mind, that had honoured him by seeking his advice, with a wisdom that was worthy of his confidence. His instinctive prejudice, strengthened in him by his own

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schooling, was in favour of the curriculum common to all Jesuit schools since the first was opened at Salamanca. But he strove manfully to suppress all prejudice in advising Adam.

'My dear boy,' said he, 'I am nothing of a Gaelic scholar . . . for the matter of that, I am not a scholar at all. But I mean that, while I can speak Latin perhaps better than the average man who is not a scholar, and can read Greek fairly fluently, at all events well enough to be interested in it, I cannot speak Gaelic at all nor read any difficult text without the help of at least the dictionary . . . so, in a purely literary sense, it would be vain of me to pretend to be able to decide the value of Gaelic as compared with Latin or Greek.' He put his arm through Adam's: 'Tell me, did you think of studying it as a living or a dead language?'

It had not occurred to Adam whether he regarded Gaelic as a living or a dead language: he could not even decide, on the spur of the moment, whether he thought of it as a living language or not. He hazarded the question: 'There are people speaking Gaelic still?'

'Undoubtedly,' said Father Clare; 'in Ireland alone there are many thousands who have practically no other language.'

'Then,' said Adam, 'it is a living language, isn't it?'

Father Clare hesitated, anxious not to give an unfair answer: the easy official answer, not necessarily untrue, that it was moribund. 'Gaelic is, in a very real sense, a very special sense, a most excellent sense, a living language,' said he; 'for some of the liveliest brains in Ireland are devoting themselves to the task of making it again the dominant language of the Irish nation.' He coughed, as though to turn things over in his mind. 'I am assuming, for the sake of this discussion, that there is an Irish nation . . . many hold that there is not . . . but I myself incline to

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the view that there is an Irish nation . . . rightly or wrongly, there is an Irish nation . . . yes, there is an Irish nation.'

'What, exactly, sir,' Adam asked, 'what, exactly, is a nation?'

Father Clare paused, and clapped him on the back : 'Ah, there,' said he, 'there you have a very old and difficult question. What is a nation? . . . I don't know whether you have ever read Shakespeare's *Henry V.*?'

Adam confessed he had not. The world of the theatre, even in its printed form, was not intimately known to him; *Hamlet* he had read, and *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, perhaps some others he had glanced into, but he found them difficult reading and dull, save for a few set speeches here and there; *Macbeth* was the only one that held his attention, without too many breaks of incomprehensible matter.

'In *Henry V.*,' said Father Clare, 'we have Shakespeare's only portrait of an Irishman . . . it is not a very flattering portrait : he represents him as a noisy and quarrelsome soldier, and makes him the more foolish by contrasting him with a perhaps equally quarrelsome but less fatuous Welshman.'

Adam's patriotic spirit was up in arms at once : 'I never could stand Welshmen, sir,' said he.

Father Clare turned to look at him. 'Is that so?' he said gently. 'Now, tell me why.'

Adam, somewhat at a loss, replied : 'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief, Taffy came to my house . . . ' but felt this was an overstatement, and stopped.

'Do you mean,' Father Clare asked, 'that you yourself know a Welshman who is a thief?'

Adam indignantly disclaimed all personal knowledge of Welshmen; whereupon Father Clare sighed. 'I did not expect you, Adam, to talk so foolishly,' said he.

Adam, rather irritated than crushed, regretted that

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he had done Father Clare the honour to consult him about his studies.

But Father Clare was too interested in his educational ideas to notice more than very superficially Adam's fallen face. 'It is always foolish to repeat cant phrases about things, and more especially persons, of whom we have no actual knowledge. When Shakespeare painted his Irish soldier, and painted him as a braggart, if not actually a base fellow, he gives us the impression that the portrait, however malicious, is done from life. . . .'

Adam's quick brain and almost quicker tongue interposed: 'But didn't Shakespeare live in the time of Queen Elizabeth?'

'Why, yes, of course,' said Father Clare; 'he was born in 1564, when she had not been long on the throne, and died in 1616, just thirteen years later than she.'

'Then *Henry V.*,' said Adam, 'was dead near a century and a half before Shakespeare was born; so how could he have painted one of Henry's soldiers from life?'

'True,' said Father Clare, 'he could not, and I appreciate your smartness in raising that objection; but he could paint an Irish soldier of his own time from life, couldn't he?'

'I suppose he could,' Adam reluctantly admitted, adding, still unwilling to concede the point, 'if he knew how.'

'I think we may take it,' Father Clare smilingly said, 'I think we may take it that Shakespeare knew how.' He cleared his throat and added, a little in the manner of Mr Flood at Belvedere, but with less youthful pomposity: 'Shakespeare was a man of genius.'

'What, exactly, is genius?' Adam asked.

Father Clare answered with trepidation: 'Let us take one question at a time. You asked me just now

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Father Clare's Surprising Observation

what was a nation, and I was about to tell you that Shakespeare's Irish soldier, Captain Macmorris, asks more or less the same question: "What is my nation?" he says, "What is my nation?" Father Clare abruptly stopped. 'After all, what does it matter what he says? The question is not what Shakespeare thought but what we think a nation is.'

As he fell silent, Adam volunteered the observation that he himself had not thought very much about it. Father Clare seemed rather relieved at this than otherwise. 'To tell you the truth, Adam,' said he, 'I do not think it of very great importance for you to know what a nation is; the great thing for you to do is to learn your lessons: politics we can leave till later on. . . . Speaking for myself, as a priest I have, of course, no politics.'

Adam remembered that the first time he had met the Provincial, that is to say, the head of all the Jesuits in Ireland, Father Muldoon, that great man had insisted on this point of priests having no politics; promptly, the question framed itself on his lips: 'Why have priests no politics?'

Equally promptly Father Clare answered: 'Because they are priests . . . and priests are, or ought to be, exclusively concerned with religion.' He patted Adam's shoulder: 'You understand that, don't you?'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam politely, though as a matter of fact he did not.

Father Clare looked at his watch: 'But we were discussing the question whether you ought to learn Gaelic, and my advice to you, on the whole, is, that you will not try to learn more at the present than you are already learning; you are one of those boys who can learn anything, and learn it pretty easily; your pit-fall in life, so far as your education goes, will be a tendency to acquire a smattering of everything and, perhaps, learn nothing really well. My advice, for what it is worth, is not to try to learn more than

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you are doing now; but if you want to learn Gaelic I will not stand in your way. Even before taking a final decision, I would advise you to talk to Father O'Gorman: he is, as you know, a real Gaelic scholar; I warn you that if you take up Gaelic under him he will not allow you to play with it, as many masters would.'

'I think,' said Adam, 'I'll leave Gaelic alone for the present.'

Father Clare held his hand a moment, and his absurd, bird-like eyes had a wistful, anxious look as he said: 'Mind you, you mustn't let me influence you; I may be wrong; and any time you want to see Father O'Gorman I'll put your case before him. He and I don't agree about everything, but he is far more learned than I, and I would bow to his decision.'

'I don't think I'll trouble him yet, anyhow,' said Adam; 'I see you don't think Gaelic is necessary, and I'm pretty sure Mr Macarthy doesn't think so either.'

Father Clare, about to release him, turned and caught his hand again. 'Mr Macarthy?' he repeated, 'What Mr Macarthy is that?'

'My guardian,' Adam answered, 'Mr Stephen Macarthy.'

Father Clare lifted his biretta and put it on the back of his head. 'Mr Stephen Macarthy?' He took a pinch of snuff. 'Not Stephen Macarthy who was here at Clongowes years and years ago?'

'He was at Clongowes, sir,' Adam answered. 'I don't know how long ago, but he told me he was here at my age,' he added in a burst of confidence, 'and that's why I'm here now.'

'Dear, dear, to think of it!' said Father Clare. 'To think of Stephen Macarthy being your guardian.' He broke off, and asked, with an absurd air of suspicion, 'Are you sure Father Muldoon isn't your guardian?'

'No, sir,' Adam answered firmly, 'he is not. Mr Macarthy is my real guardian.'

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Father Clare's curiosity carried him away, and he became for a moment as a talkative parrot. 'You're sure Stephen Macarthy is your guardian? . . . I thought it was Father Muldoon. . . . But it's Stephen Macarthy. . . . To be sure, to be sure, Stephen Macarthy, your guardian—well, well.' He looked at Adam very hard: 'Why, now I come to think of it, you're the living image of him.' He broke off, and crushed his biretta down on his nose. 'Never mind now, never mind; good-bye, good-bye, God bless you.' He heaved a deep sigh. 'Stephen Macarthy, Stephen Macarthy, we were boys here together.' He dropped his voice mysteriously. 'I'll tell you a little secret, Adam: Stephen Macarthy was a great loss to the Church, and I wonder now if God in His Providence has not sent you here to take his place.' He shook his hand once more. 'Good-bye, Adam Macarthy; God bless you.'

Adam had reached the door to the school house when he called him back hurriedly. 'Adam,' he cried, 'Adam!'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam, turning back, and finding him in great confusion.

'Did I say Macarthy just now? I meant, of course, Macfadden,' he chattered, and added what seemed to Adam the astounding sentence: 'You need not tell anyone what I said to you about Mr Macfadden being a great loss to the Church.'

Chapter Fourteen

ADAM IS ADVISED NOT TO DISCUSS HIS MOTHER

ADAM had not been a week at Clongowes ere he forgot the hardness of his bed; he had not been there a fortnight before he ceased to struggle with the difficulties in washing himself, and was content to be as Isabel-coloured with regard to those parts of him not exposed to the air, as were the other boys . . . that cleanliness is next to godliness has never been an article of faith in the Catholic Church . . . perhaps it is a pagan virtue . . . perhaps, when all is said and done, there is no virtue in it. . . . Anyhow, Adam was content to do as Rome does: he was as tidy as any other boy, perhaps the tidiest of those with whom he came in contact. Other things there were at Clongowes to which he easily accommodated himself, but there was one which, twice a day, roused him to physical and mental revolt . . . The tea. The thought of that tea haunted his sleep, and one morning in the third week he was at the school he thought of it at morning prayer, and that thought, on an empty stomach so early in the morning, chased him out of chapel. . . . He had barely cleared the sacred precincts when it seemed to him that all the tea he had tried to drink since he left Dublin was up in arms against him, determined to make a sight of him before the world. . . . He was not quite clear what happened, but he heard a lay-brother say, 'Dear, dear, what's that now; what's that?' and he was marched down the breezy covered way dividing the school house from the infirmary.

Adam is Advised not to Discuss his Mother

In the infirmary, a lady bearing an astounding resemblance to Attracta grown rather elderly, in spectacles, looked at his tongue and prescribed for him. He understood her to say that she didn't think him bilious, and that she was asking him if he suffered from nerves, and Adam politely answered that perhaps he suffered a little from nerves, but he thought he suffered much more from the tea. The lady smiled sympathetically. 'I wouldn't drink that tea,' said she, 'if I was never so. Would you like a cup of my own?'

Adam said he would, and it was given him; and this kind lady, confident in her diagnosis that he was not bilious, added several rounds of buttered toast, which he consumed with greater gusto than anything he had touched for some weeks. Then the two of them talked about literature in which they were equally interested, although it did not appear that she was acquainted with any of the works in which he was interested, nor he with any which interested her; still, their conversation was very friendly; for she told him many of the best passages from *Handy Andy*, laughing over them the while, and he for his part recited to her the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, to be rewarded by the observation that she would have liked it better if it had been an Irish urn.

'Are there Irish urns?' Adam asked, glad to find someone acquainted with the question of urns.

'Of course there are,' said she; 'the country's full of them. My sister was housekeeper to Canon Fricker at Killinaman, and his reverence had three and more he never used.'

'What are urns really used for?' Adam asked.

She looked at him surprisedly. 'Wasn't I telling you his reverence never used them at all?' she said, and would have been for dropping the subject if Adam had not clung to it.

'Were they at all like Grecian urns?' he asked.

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'What's a Grecian urn like?' asked she, and he was still undecided whether to give it up or repeat the poem over again very slowly so that she could question him on any point that she thought needed clearing up, when the kitchen door opened and Father Denver came in. Father Denver was the minister, a portly priest and not very young, but with a quick and joyful step and a round and jovial voice, in no way resembling the Jesuit of the Evangelical or even the Benedictine tradition, a man incapable of crooked thoughts or cruel acts. So far Adam had seen little of him, but he stretched out his arms as if they were the oldest friends and roared with a benevolent laugh: 'Well, well, just look at him! To see the poor sick fellow filling his rum-tum with buttered toast. Run for the doctor, run for the doctor.' This exhortation was addressed to empty air. The lady in charge of the infirmary said she did not think there was much the matter with Adam.

Father Denver gravely waggled his head from side to side: 'Tut, tut,' he said, 'a dreadful case, a dreadful case. . . Buttered toast on the brain and visibly working downwards. Whatever shall we do?'

'I think,' said the lady, 'he might go back to the school now.'

But Father Denver still shook his head. 'Oh, no, no, no,' said he, 'never do. Smelling of buttered toast like that, he'd corrupt an angel. We'd have the whole school coming in here to eat buttered toast.' Then he came down to business. 'I hear you don't like our tea,' said he.

Adam confessed that he did not.

'Very well, then,' said Father Denver, 'we'll compromise over it. In future you shall come to second breakfast, where they bring you a fresh pot of tea all to yourself; but in the evening, if you want to drink tea at all, I'm afraid you'll have to drink what's good enough for the boys. How's that now?'

Adam is Advised not to Discuss his Mother

Adam thanked him very heartily, as indeed he had reason to be grateful, for second breakfast with the select half-dozen proved to be a very cosy meal, quite unlike any other. You had unstinted rolls and butter and what seemed to him, after the past few weeks, the most exquisitely fragrant freshly-made tea. Could he have had the same thing at night, the cup of his physical happiness had been full to overflowing . . . as it was, he consoled himself at supper by the thought of how much he would enjoy his breakfast.

Also, second breakfast was to be enjoyed for the reason that he found among the little company there the pleasant boy who had driven with him on the car from Sallins station; his name was Dominic Cahill. He was in the Lower Line, and two classes higher than Adam in the school, but condescended to him without any show of arrogance. Soon he came into Adam's prayers for those he loved.

Dominic Cahill, it took Adam a little time to realise, was one of the brightest lights of the school: he had an extraordinary capacity for learning what he was taught while shutting his apprehension and locking it against the possibility of any casual knowledge. Give him the dullest school book and he would faithfully commit it to memory . . . but he could read the newspaper through without understanding a word of it. In him Adam felt that he had found his intellectual complement; for they had no common knowledge but much common kindness.

Adam opened their conversation by introducing himself as the boy whom Master Cahill had helped on to the outside car at Sallins station some weeks before, and he had the kindly answer, 'I remember you. How's your ankle?'

Adam thanked him and said his ankle was quite all right. 'I only had a bit of a kick on it,' he explained. . . . Dominic said kicks could be very sore, and Adam, quite forgetful of the one that he himself

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had launched into a vital part of his putative father, said they didn't hurt really.

Dominic Cahill gazed at him with grave, lovable, ox-like eyes. 'You are a brave lad,' said he.

'Oh, go on,' said Adam, 'not a bit.' Though he knew himself to have fished shamelessly for some such tribute to his valour.

He was unprepared for his companion's next speech. 'I hope you are as brave as that morally. . . . It's easier to be brave physically than morally.' Having said this, Dominic winced, and added: 'I know I sound awfully priggish, because I'm not good at expressing myself, but what I say is true . . . at least I think so. . . . I mean, I've been told so.'

Adam did not need to be told that originality was not his new friend's salient characteristic, but he felt no desire to laugh at him any more than he had desired to laugh at Father Innocent. 'Yes,' said Adam, 'I've heard Mr Macarthy say the same thing.'

'Mr Macarthy?' repeated Dominic; 'is that the same Mr Macarthy you spoke of before?'

'Yes,' said Adam, who really was under the impression that there was only one Mr Macarthy in the world and that everyone ought to know all about him.

But Dominic Cahill's school books said nothing of Mr Macarthy, nothing of any living Macarthy, so Dominic discreetly asked for more information about him.

Now that it came to the point, Adam found it difficult to say anything very informative about his guardian. He furnished Dominic with his full name and address, and then the fountain of his information ran momentarily dry.

Dominic tried to help him. 'I see,' said he, 'he's your guardian, and he lives in Mountjoy Square, Dublin.'

'Yes,' said Adam, buttering his roll, 'that's it: he's my guardian, and lives in Mountjoy Square, Dublin.'

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'And, of course, he's a very kind man,' Dominic took for granted.

'Fearfully kind,' Adam gurgled enthusiastically, with his buttered roll in one hand and his tea-cup in the other, and his mouth compounding the contents of both.

Cahill further predicated that he was a good Catholic, and Adam nodded vigorously: 'Topping!' said he, and then emptied his mouth to add: 'Father Clare says he was a great loss to the Church.'

Dominic's face fell, and he asked solemnly: 'What do you suppose Father Clare meant by that?'

Adam's tone fell into harmony: 'I thought it meant that everyone here must have thought a lot of him.'

'Oh,' said Dominic reflectively, 'was he here at school, or what was he here for?'

'He was here at school,' Adam said; 'when he was my age he was here at school.'

'And how long did he remain here?' Dominic asked.

'I've no notion,' Adam confessed, adding apologetically: 'I really don't know much about him. . . . You see, he only became my guardian a few months ago, and I'd never heard of him before that.'

'You'd never heard of him before that?' Dominic repeated; 'then, I suppose, you hardly know whether he fulfils his religious duties or not?'

Adam was up in arms at once in Mr Macarthy's defence. 'Oh, rather!' he cried; 'he goes to long mass every Sunday.'

Dominic was unconvinced: 'There's many go to mass that are not good Catholics,' he declared.

Adam was pained by his doubts. 'I bet you anything you like, Mr Macarthy's a good Catholic,' said he; 'what on earth makes you doubt it?'

From sheer good-nature, Dominic hesitated about replying, but, repeatedly urged by Adam, he said at last: 'I should have thought, from what you tell me,

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Father Clare said that Mr Macarthy may have been a spoiled priest.'

From his companion's tone Adam scented something vaguely demonic. 'What is a spoiled priest?' he asked in a hushed voice.

But Dominic refused further to be drawn: 'If you don't know already, it's not for me to tell you, nor for me to risk making a scandal about a man I never heard of before in my life. . . .'

'But you might tell me what a spoiled priest is?' Adam urged.

'I will not,' Dominic answered firmly, and inquired, to turn the conversation, how it was that Adam came to be at second breakfast.

It was unconsciously diplomatic of Dominic to lure Adam's attention from the interesting subject of his guardian to the most interesting of all subjects—himself. He readily informed his friend even of the smallest detail relative to the reasons for his coming to second breakfast. Nothing was too sordid or too trivial to be overlooked in connection with this matter; he pursued it so far as to throw out a hint that the only good thing he knew about his mother was that she would not drink tea that had not been freshly made. It was on the tip of his tongue to say that she would not drink tea at all if she could get porter, but he refrained from this, as, perhaps, impugning that claim to gentility on his part which Mr O'Toole had exhorted him to uphold at all costs.

His heart sank as he read in Dominic Cahill's patient eyes that he was a little shocked by his tone in speaking of his mother.

'Some mothers are better than others, no doubt,' said Cahill, 'but I think there was ne'er a mother yet that didn't suffer a great deal for her children's sake.'

'You mean . . . ' said Adam.

Dominic reddened. 'You're too young for me to say exactly what I mean,' said he; 'but if I were you,

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Macfadden, if I couldn't talk about my mother more nicely than that I wouldn't talk about her at all.' He waited for his words to sink in, and then added: 'Anyhow, I'm not going to talk with you about her.' To emphasise his words, he turned away, and addressed himself exclusively to the few others at the table.

Tears stole down Adam's cheeks as he finished his buttered roll, and one fell into his tea-cup. . . . He felt very much inclined to use the naughty language of the Dublin gutters to his new acquaintance. . . . But his longing for the sympathy of Dominic Cahill won an easy victory over his momentary irritation, and as the latter rose from the table Adam jumped up and followed him out. Just by the refectory door he caught him, and when it had closed behind them and they were alone in the re-entering angle of the corridor he said to him plaintively: 'Won't you talk to me any more?'

Cahill's dully beautiful eyes looked into his. 'Of course,' he said slowly, 'I'll talk to you about anything that is not against my conscience.'

'Thanks, old man,' said Adam; 'thanks awfully.' And so began their friendship.

Chapter Fifteen

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

HAPPY as Adam was at Clongowes, and even, compared with his last months at Belvedere, modestly successful, the Christmas holidays approached none too quickly for him. The very joy of discussing second breakfast with placidly virtuous Dominic Cahill paled before the thought of sitting once again at table with Mr Macarthy or even Herr Behre. While at Belvedere Adam had already savoured the delight of possessing a home: he had learnt to look longingly through the window at the honest and far from ugly clock-face of St George's Church; for it was jocund to reflect that a face identical with that which envisaged him was looking down into the window of the little room which held the works of Mr Keats and the bull's eye lantern which added so greatly to the luxury of reading them. . . . He had brought that dumpy book containing Keats to Clongowes with him, but, in the absence of the bull's eye lantern, they failed to command his attention. The presence of the volume, however, in his desk did not escape the attention of the study prefect, and he was summoned before the rector to explain his harbouring it. There was a further charge of concealing in the same desk a complete and unexpurgated edition of the works of Shakespeare which Adam had borrowed from Herr Behre, with the, as we have said, unfulfilled intention of mastering them.

Crowded recollections of foolish punishments for supposititious offences at Belvedere lent Adam's walk

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some trepidation as he made his way to the rector's room in the old building: it is a cheerless thing to pace long corridors and climb high stairs to judgment, and all the more if your earliest experience has been one of the cruel fatuity of your elders. And so far Father Rector was little more than a name, a cloudy name of majesty to Adam. Adam had heard that he was a good man: he had heard that he was not: he had no idea what to expect from him. It was a relief to find him entirely charming, most reasonable, actually flattering. . . . 'For,' said Father Rector, 'it is unusual for a boy of your age to have such books as these in his desk, but, then, it is unusual for a boy of your age to take a serious interest in literature. . . . I am afraid there is no other boy of your age in the school who is equally interested in the masterpieces of the English language.' He looked closely at Adam: 'I take it that you really keep these books to read and not in order that you may point out certain loose and reprehensible passages to other boys?'

Adam truthfully assured him that such an idea had never entered his head, and Father Rector went on urbanely: 'Of course not; I should never dream of accusing you of such a thing . . . though it has been done, it has been done, to my knowledge it has been done; even,' he sighed, 'even with the text set down for our special study by the Government.' He cast his eyes upon the Falstaffian volume of Shakespeare and the dwarfed Keats which lay on the desk in front of him. 'I am convinced,' he said, 'that you would never use either of these volumes for an immoral purpose . . . but I am less sure of others; to show my confidence in you, I am content to give them back to you, on condition that you never allow them to pass out of your own hands so long as you remain at Clongowes.'

Adam eagerly gave his undertaking, and Father

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Rector handed him the volumes; then he turned to another publication lying in front of him, which Adam recognised as an odd number of the 'Boy's Own Paper' which he had bought for the sake of a coloured picture of birds' eggs. . . . It had been an ambition of Adam's once to go and find a bird's egg somewhere, sometime; so far this had not been carried out, but you never knew when this picture might be useful, if a bird happened to lay an egg somewhere handy. As the good priest's eyes descended on it, his expression became extremely grave, and he turned the pages, making distressful sounds the while. 'Yes,' he said at last, 'those two books you may keep, but this, I fear, I must burn.' Possibly noticing the bubbling question on Adam's lips, he added: 'A boy of your intelligence, so well read in many respects, ought to have known that the whole tenor of this production is contrary to faith . . . it must burn.' Then he held out his hand and opened the door: 'I absolve you from all evil intentions; keep your Shakespeare . . . keep your Keats . . . but, remember, it is most important of all to keep the faith. Mind the step. Good-day.' . . . And that was that.

From this ordeal Adam returned with the proud heart of a conqueror, and little boys who had seen him depart, and believing him to be going to some form or other of chastisement, had whispered to him sympathy of a back-stiffening nature, were disgruntled (though they might not admit it) to see him return, as it were, transfigured and glorified. . . . For was he not the only boy in the Third Line permitted to keep an unexpurgated Shakespeare, to say nothing of the more recondite works of Mr Keats, in his desk? . . . Not, indeed, that any other boy in the Third Line had the smallest desire to possess either of these volumes, though there were, perhaps, some had been tempted by an offer of a volume containing only those parts of Shakespeare which Mr Bowdler had

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cut from the poet's corpus, and to discover which for oneself was a labour too tedious.

No incidents of interest comparative with this arose during that first term at Clongowes: if he knew no greater triumph than his return from the rector's room, neither did he experience any trepidation comparable with that of going thither. That first term at Clongowes, save for its beginning and its ending, made a grey, pleasantly grey, patch in the lively pattern of Adam's life, but the Breaking-up day was vivid enough. The rising with the other boys by artificial light (no second breakfast to-day, thank you), the gleam of hoar frost on tree and road-way, suggesting to picturesque and romantic young minds that the highways could not be traversed by horses at all, nor eke foot passengers unless provided with alpen stocks, were rich with the essence of romance, though Adam, with all the town boy's credulity as to the phenomena of nature to be observed in the barbarous regions beyond the tram-lines, was seriously perturbed by the thought of impassable roads, and maybe snow-bound trains, impeding his return to within sound of St George's bells. It was a weight off his mind when the grinding of wheels and cracking of whips, sharp as pistol firing, in the frosty air, announced the arrival of the first cars at the portal of the old house, and presently to find himself seated on one, beside no less a person than Father Bernard James, drawn by a horse at something like a gallop in the direction of Sallins railway station. What a fine thing it was to be alive that morning! Even Father Bernard himself forgot to be anything but just jolly, as if no such terrific and, on the whole, rather annoying, thing as religion had ever entered his mind.

And then there was the train, which, to Adam, was like being home already; for he really considered his life to have begun on the day when

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he and Caroline Brady made themselves so very much at home in one, in the mystical darkness of Dalky tunnel. Adam had already noted that there was no tunnel to speak of between Kingsbridge and Sallins: this he regretted, as indicating the unfinished condition of the otherwise commendable railway line connecting these geographical expressions.

The day was yet young when he reached Kingsbridge . . . and there—oh, joy! was Herr Behre, with outstretched arms, awaiting him.

Adam had many faults of vanity, but not that priggish form which forbade him to accept, in the spirit they were offered, of Herr Behre's hugs and kisses. . . . Nor was he so callous as to fail that moment to remember that the only other occasion on which the musician had kissed him was the day that Father Innocent had died. He was thinking this, and of how, perhaps, he owed to Father Innocent himself, now Saint Innocent, maybe helping God's Mother to hang the walls of heaven with holly and ivy for Christmas, or to pack up toys for St Nicholas to drop down chimneys, this same Father Innocent who had remembered him in his dying hour and, likely, the last prayer he said, the happiness of the friendship of Herr Behre, and of Mr Macarthy, and of all the good people who had been kind to him since the first and kindest of them all was dead.

And then there he was on another car, sitting with Herr Behre on one side and the carman, heavier than the twain, on the other, and his smart gladstone bag between them, holding the clothes he would wear at Christmas and the now historic editions of Shakespeare and Keats. To the left, over Kingsbridge, with its handsome perspective of the Liffey, from the fleet of Guinness's barges outside the brewery to the blue-domed Custom House in the far distance, and the proudly ported Four Courts holding a somewhat lop-sided balance between the two. . . . Then the car

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plunged into some fanciful short cut unknown to Adam and, he suspected, but partially known to their driver, past a queer old church, wherein, Herr Behre told him, were to be seen the desiccated remains of men of alleged holiness whose earthly crowns had long demised. . . . Adam's lively imagination, more than ever active on this joyful day, readily visualised them in the likeness of once human kippers. . . . He accepted the view put forward by the carman that this long tenure of their mundane exterior was a proof of their full enjoyment of spiritual beatitude, but he preferred to think of Father Innocent as charitably feeding worms at Glasnevin. . . . It was a little gloomy to think of death at all on your way home for the holidays, and he wished the carman, even for the sake of getting him home the faster, had not chosen the road he did. (For Adam had an ever-growing horror of anything that reminded him of the foulness in which he had been born.) But when they emerged into the light of something more like civilisation, where the west side of Rutland Square, here called Granby Row, joins with that thoroughfare called Great Britain (or Parnell) Street, Adam soon shook off all gloomy view of past or future.

It occurred to him now for the first time, looking across the horse's back at the tall red-brick Georgian houses, with the grey of Charlemont House, built by the famous nobleman of that name, but long since devoted to the purposes of registering the births and deaths of the citizens of Ireland (though Mr Macfadden had been too patriotic to recognise its existence), that Rutland Square was good to look upon, and, passing up Gardiner's Row, he perceived that the glimpse of Mountjoy Square, closing the perspective, had a pleasantness not merely sentimental. He would have liked to go straight to it, but the address given to the carman was St George's Place, and so past Belvedere, of which Adam felt scornful now as a mere day-school,

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he turned his horse to the left up Temple Street, and St George's bells were ringing ten as Adam fell into the arms of the faithful Attracta. . . . 'Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, you have grown!' said she, as though it would have been more reasonable for him, being deprived of the care and consideration of herself and her mistress, to have diminished.

And there was St Kevin to be greeted. . . . Adam was quite a long time trying to make up his mind whether St Kevin knew him or not. At first he thought he did; for he came forward, as Adam thought, to greet him, but it proved to be his intention to describe geometrical figures in and about Herr Behre's ankles. . . . But if St Kevin did not recognise him as an old friend, he was quite content, on the strength of his intimacy with Attracta and Herr Behre, to accept him as one who had moved in proper society. He was even content to leave Herr Behre and Attracta herself to follow Adam when Attracta had given him the parcel containing his bull's-eye lantern. It is conceivable, though Adam did not think of it at the time, that he was misled by the odoriferous nature of the contents of this parcel into the simple faith that Adam had brought him an uncommonly succulent Christmas dish.

Adam's first act of proprietorship in his regained territory was to fill the bull's-eye lantern and to trim the wick. That done, he placed it, with a box of matches and his stunted Keats, in a nameless receptacle unlikely to be searched by his austere landlady and yet to be reached without leaving his bed, and, much gratified by his ingenuity, proceeded with Herr Behre to Mountjoy Square.

It was gratifying also to his physical vanity to find, as they made their way through Temple Street and along Gardiner's Place, that he had no longer to move at a sort of canter in order to keep up with Herr Behre's strides: two paces to the musician's one kept

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them fairly level and caused him no fatigue; also he had not to crane his neck quite so much to make his conversation audible. . . . He had a faint hope that *Attracta* was, after all, right in allocating his recent growth to the category of observed phenomena. And this was strengthened by Dr Hillingdon-Ryde, who, overtaking them in Gardiner's Place, and receiving Adam's salute as he passed by, jumped off his bicycle to turn back and say, with the thunderbolt of a clap upon his shoulder: 'What? Adam Macfadden? Why, I hardly knew you!' It is true that he did not specify the causes which made Adam difficult for him to recognise, but Adam was content to believe that he had grown out of all recognition.

And, withal, the joy of his home-coming was dashed with a sub-acid flavour. . . . He knew now what had troubled him from the moment he had reached Kingsbridge, or, at all events, had climbed on the car to leave Kingsbridge station, until he found himself now on the north side of Mountjoy Square, within a stone's throw of that door which had been opened to him for the first time just nine months before. . . . Nine months: what was the idea associated with the term of nine months? . . . He gave it up. . . . But, anyhow, he knew why he was not altogether satisfied with his reception in Dublin. He had been jubilant to see Herr Behre waiting for him, but his face had fallen, as the heart within him, when he realised that Herr Behre was come alone to meet him. . . . It was not Herr Behre who saw him off, nor, after all, was Herr Behre his guardian. It is true that he would not have been pleased to find Herr Behre in the company of that one of his guardians whom his mother had appointed: his esteemed godfather, Mr O'Toole. Even he had been but moderately pleased to find Herr Behre had for a companion Mr O'Meagher. . . . He could not say why, but Mr O'Meagher seemed fading out of the pictures which he loved best to conjure up

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when dropping off to sleep : so far as he existed at all as a memorable figure, it was only by reason of his claim to be Josephine's father, and, oddly enough, it required an effort of will to visualise him in that relationship. . . . Adam thought he was fonder of Josephine's father than of her mother, but he could see her mother in Josephine : he could not see her father in her even when that kindly man almost pathetically desired him to do so. . . . He did not think Josephine was like her mother, but for sure, whether it pleased him or not, she was her mother's child.

His quick brain rehearsed all this between Gardiner's Place and their destination, and all thought ended with the conviction that, glad as he was to see Herr Behre waiting for him at Kingsbridge, and grateful to him as he was for coming to meet him, he would have been better pleased to see Mr Macarthy, and felt within him the rising resentment of a jealous boy that Mr Macarthy had not troubled to do so. . . . His spirits sank lower and lower as they approached the door, but his smouldering resentment began to throw out flame.

'I suppose,' he snorted, 'Mr Macarthy was too busy to think of meeting me?'

'Ach !' cried Herr Behre, absent-mindedly lifting him up the steps with his long arm; 'there, there, did I not tell you? . . . He is not too busy to meet you, of course not. . . . Did I not tell you—he is ill.'

Adam's spirits collapsed so utterly that he seemed to feel them coldly lying equally divided between his boots. Simultaneously the flame of his resentment guttered ignominiously out. . . . It seemed to him that it was smothered by something that had got him by the throat.

It was in his nature to try to say something, but it ended in nothing.

Chapter Sixteen

MR MACARTHY LIES IN BED

A LADY of no great age, dressed in a becoming costume, which Adam associated with the non-religious staff of a hospital, admitted them to Mr Macarthy's sitting-room, where Adam was too awed by the thought of his guardian lying, perhaps, helpless behind the folding-doors, to feel himself at once at home. They were asked to wait a moment, so they sat down while the nurse answered Mr Behre's questions as to her patient's condition. Adam was surprised to learn that his guardian was a delicate man, relieved to know that any danger there had been seemed passed. The trouble had been with his lungs: the details concerning it were discussed in terms he could not follow . . . anyhow, the long and short of it was, his guardian was well enough to see visitors—he had seen some already that day. . . . The flutter of skirts and a cheerful good-bye, spoken in a voice Adam seemed to know but could not name, told that one, or perhaps more, departed now.

The nurse left them, returning in a moment to admit them to the sick-room. Adam entered it with curiosity underlying his very real anxiety: he wanted to see not only his guardian but his guardian's bedroom. Before giving him the hip-bath, Mr Macarthy had taught him the more advanced stages, still unknown to him, of the gentle art of self-cleansing in his own bath-room at Mountjoy Square: quite a luxurious tiled apartment it was, with a geyser and other thermal furniture: Adam believed that it was the only room

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in the suite that had no book in it, being consecrated solely to Hygeia. He knew there were many books in his guardian's bedroom from the glimpses he had caught of it, but these glimpses were few and far between; for the owner was always up and about betimes, and Adam had no excuse to gratify his curiosity by passing the threshold until now. . . . But there, at last, lay the man he thought so strong, lying in bed like an elderly child, and waited on by a young woman not so very unlike Sister who had nursed Adam's own little self at the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital. A sudden impulse, that momentarily drove even curiosity from his mind, almost as though it were a shameful thing, flung him on his knees by his guardian's bed. 'I hope you're better, sir!' he cried.

'All the better for seeing you,' Mr Macarthy cheerily answered, and Adam felt there was still strength in the arm that pressed him to rise until he rested on the bed.

Adam found himself playing 'Little pigs went to market' (taught him in infancy by Miss or Mrs Robinson) with his guardian's hand while he asked: 'Why didn't you send for me?'

Mr Macarthy laughed softly, a very kind laugh, Adam thought. 'And what would they have said at Clongowes if I'd sent for you?' he inquired; to which Adam's reply was a somewhat incoherent defiance of anyone at Clongowes who might so far presume as to say anything. He was only conscious of Mr Macarthy looking fondly in his eyes, and his own eyes filled with tears as the sick man said: 'If I had been really ill I would have sent for you, but it doesn't do to be hysterical.' Then his tone changed: 'Sit down over there by the fire, Adam, and tell us all about yourself. Mr Behre will be as curious as I am to know how you got on at Clongowes.' He turned to the German: 'You've never been to Clongowes, have you?'

'No,' said Herr Behre absent-mindedly, 'and never will.'

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So Adam sitting by the fire told them of such things at Clongowes as he thought would redound to his favour, with just a little colouring of the ridiculous here and there that he might not be suspected of romancing. It was impossible to explain to Herr Behre why Father Rector had burnt the *Boy's Own Paper*: 'You will not tell me that it is on the Index Expurgatorius?' he pleaded.

Mr Macarthy laughed. 'Not in what somebody called The Great Mother Index of 1608—that deals with Jerome Cardan (whose name is perpetuated in the driving shaft of our motors, some of them) and other big birds . . . but the *B.O.P.* is implicitly on the index all the same. It's funny but logical; for the paper in my time anyhow was frankly evangelical and seriously analysed there is no denying that it was an elaborate and seductive, more or less seductive, tract.'

'Bah!' said Herr Behre, 'I wish all you religious people would burn each other's books.'

'My church,' Mr Macarthy submitted, 'does its best, as Adam has found to his cost.'

Herr Behre snorted: 'You and your church! Bah!' said he. 'You have no church . . . any more than I.'

'Possibly less,' said Mr Macarthy, 'for you have a faith in the imminence of the social revolution, to say nothing of its desirability, that I have not so far felt about anything whatever.'

While their talk went to and fro Adam had leisure at last to give his curiosity free play and his eyes wandered at large round the room. After all, it contained nothing extraordinary. Mr Macarthy lay in a rather large bed from which he could look out on Mountjoy Square, with the wintry sunlight now at noon, playing among the babies and their perambulators in the central plot. Adam could see the seats which had helped or promised to help him in his efforts

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to learn the bicycle. He recalled, too, how several times he had walked with Mr Macarthy round that central plot after mass on Sunday. He remembered Mr Macarthy telling him that it was two hundred and twenty yards in circumference; so eight times round it was a mile, and across its centre was rather more than seventy yards.

There had been a time when Mr Macarthy used to run across it, and eight times and more than that around it, too; but that belonged to a remote past, since when much water had run under Butt and other bridges. And Mr Macarthy had seen it run under many bridges; for he had not spent his whole life in Mountjoy Square. Waterloo Bridge, Adam had heard him speak of, and the old bridge at Walton that was also on the Thames, and Magdalen Bridge which was at Oxford, and the Forth Bridge and the Brig o' Doon, both in Scotland, and many foreign bridges: the Pont Neuf and the great bridge over the Hollandsch Diep and the pontoon bridge linking Ehrenbreitstein with Coblenz; and bridges yet farther afield in Italy and Russia, and away in Asia itself, and home again, east about by the Brooklyn Bridge, which Adam had heard described by Father Innocent on the authority of hearsay and a picture postcard as a wonder reducing the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to insignificance.

His guardian must have had an extraordinary life, yet there was little in his bedroom to show it. The wall-paper where it was visible behind the books and pictures was a rich deep blue, the wooden fittings of all kinds the colour of dark oak. Over the fire-place hung a large carbon print of Holbein's portrait of Erasmus: beneath it was a very old and, Adam thought, unsightly crucifix, with a text in Greek lettering which Adam could read but could not understand:

Δαβίδ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγέννησε τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου

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and beneath that a framed theatre programme which he was now old enough to perceive to be incongruous. It informed the world that on a date undecipherable from where he sat, at the Grand Theatre, London, the Lessee of which was Mr Oswald Onsin, and the Manager Mr Oswald Onsin, Mr Oswald Onsin would present a New and Original Comedy, 'What Rot!' by Oswald Onsin, in which, what fat lettering suggested must be, the leading part of Lord Algy Taplow would be impersonated by Mr Oswald Onsin in scenery designed by Mr Oswald Onsin and with effects invented by Mr Oswald Onsin: the whole masterpiece being produced by Mr Oswald Onsin and played to music selected by an amateur of no less distinction than that gentleman himself. The display of this document in the place of honour in Mr Macarthy's bedroom puzzled Adam not a little. Later on he was to learn that it puzzled Mr Macarthy's other visitors, most of them, as much or more than him.

Mr Burns explained its presence as on account of its containing the name of Miss Belinda Bellingham (Mrs Oswald Onsin) with whom in the young days of her beauty, said Mr Burns, Macarthy had been in love. And as he spoke of an occasion in the reign of Queen Victoria, that reign so illustrious by reason of its length, when he had helped Mr Macarthy to unharness the fair Belinda's chariot outside the Gaiety Theatre and draw it by devious ways to the Shelbourne Hotel, this was the theory generally obtaining; but Adam found it too thin for credence. There was no portrait of Miss Belinda Bellingham about the place: though there were portraits of other ladies, including Mrs Burns, and a very faded photograph of the Marchesa, from which perhaps Adam had subconsciously derived the basis of certain dreams of her . . . besides, if Belinda Bellingham were the wife of Mr Oswald Onsin, Adam could not imagine his guardian indulging in a passion for her, damaging to himself and the ninth

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commandment. Save for his ready laughter, Mr Macarthy seemed to him rather an austere sort of man : he ate little, when alone drank only tea or coffee, seldom smoked, and (so far as Adam knew) never went to music-hall or picture palace. Sometimes he visited the Abbey Theatre; but that was not the sort of place, Adam imagined, to take your pleasure in, any more than in a concert room or picture gallery.

Adam was staring at the Greek inscription beneath the crucifix, trying lazily to construe it, but baffled by the apparent absence of substantive other than proper nouns that were only vaguely familiar, when Mr Behre rose to go, and he found himself alone with his guardian.

'Come over here by the bed and talk to me,' said Mr Macarthy. 'I expect you have many questions that you have been saving up to puzzle my poor brain with.'

Adam bashfully dropped his eyes, protesting that he had been a foolish fellow to ask so many questions, and that he meant never to trouble his guardian in this particular again.

'Tut, tut,' said Mr Macarthy : 'it is only by questioning that we can learn anything—though, mark you, there are many questions the answers to which only teach us the fatuity of asking them . . . little children, for example, only learn how not to be silly by being silly. Philosophers will ask questions that fools would deem idiotic,' he added with a thoughtful smile; 'they very often are.'

'Are they, sir?' said Adam inattentively; for his mind was already wandering to a little book lying face downwards on the table at Mr Macarthy's elbow. He could not resist the temptation to take it up and examine it. It was a thin, finely printed volume, lettered on the vellum binding, *Aftermath*, by . . . he was thrilled to read the name, David Byron-Quinn.

Mr Macarthy's eyes followed his to the book, and it

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may be that they twinkled, though Adam did not notice it. 'You are interested in that?' he queried.

But something that he had acquired at Clongowes forbade Adam to admit that he was: 'I just took it up,' he said half apologetically.

'Evidently,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but not because you were interested, eh?'

'Not particularly interested,' Adam answered, still fencing aimlessly.

'Then I should put it down again,' Mr Macarthy suggested, and Adam obeyed, but not before he had read on the fly-leaf, in sloping handwriting, 'Stephen, from D.P. June 24, 1893.'—The date of the month had a line through it, and in another hand the correction, '23rd.' At the foot of the page there was, in the sloping writing: 'If you have the patience to read so far as page 57, you may understand me better than you do now,' and below that there were words that Adam knew to be German, though he did not know enough of that language to take their meaning at a glance; he thought he had seen them somewhere before . . . perhaps on a piece of music in Herr Behre's room:

'Ein Tag im Jahre sind die Todten frei.'

Their conversation was interrupted by the nurse re-entering with a large tray, on which Adam was rejoiced to see not only the invalid's luncheon but his own. Clearing the bed-table for the tray to be set upon it, he carried away the book of Sir David Byron-Quinn's poems, together with a newspaper, to his place by the fire. Eating his luncheon, the simplicity of which seemed to him now luxurious, he forgot about literature and everything else except the joys of filling his stomach. But after luncheon, when his guardian fell into a long silence, which Adam, obeying the nurse's instruction, did not break lest he should scare

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away slumber, he took up first the newspaper, which was on the point of sending him to sleep, when he had the happy thought of taking up the book.

He read again the inscription on the fly-leaf, and then turned to what promised to be a picture: as frontispiece there was reproduced, in photogravure, the portrait of the author he had seen now more than once in the National Gallery: and, so much reduced, it looked in black and white far more effective than did the original painting. The whole thing seemed more alive: the man's face had a keenness which had somehow been brushed away by Lady Daphne Page's sentimental pencil: in it the dead major, Sir David Byron-Quinn, resembled less the living Mr Byron O'Toole: he looked a man not easily slain. . . . Nevertheless, he had been slain, Adam remembered, by some wild people in Africa: not South Africa, where Adam's uncle had disappeared, but north of the Equator, in the Soudan, not so far from the Blue Nile. . . . What was the name of the place—he ought to remember. He framed his mouth to cry it as he had once cried it in St Stephen's Green, years and years ago, the day he had first seen the Marchesa della Venasalvatica, who had been Lady Daphne Page . . . the name of the place was Kordofan.

Adam was trying to recall what he had read of the author of *Aftermath* in the National Gallery catalogue and what he had been told of him by the Marchesa and Mr O'Meagher and others, and to piece his several fragments of information together, when a gentle stir in the bed wakened him to the knowledge that his guardian's eyes were fixed on him. 'Well?' said Mr Macarthy, 'so you are interested?'

Adam was not quite sure whether to feel guilty or not, and merely said, 'I thought you were asleep.'

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'And, thinking me asleep,' said Mr Macarthy, 'you considered it your duty to find out whether these poems were fit to be perused by an invalid.'

Adam, relieved that his tone, albeit ironical, held no reproof, said that he had not read the book: he confessed he had been puzzling over the dedicatory inscription. Mr Macarthy said there was nothing puzzling in that.

'I can't understand the German words,' Adam admitted.

Mr Macarthy assured him that nothing could be simpler. 'Just bear in mind that "Tod" is German for death, and, consequently, "die Todten" means those who are dead.'

Adam turned to the fly-leaf again and attacked the problem with spirit: 'Does it mean that sometimes the dead are let loose?'

Mr Macarthy feebly clapped his hands: 'The meaning could not be more graphically expressed, and you will understand the allusion if you turn to the page mentioned above. Is it 76?'

'No,' said Adam, 'it's 57.'

Mr Macarthy passed his hand across his brow, as though brushing away a cobweb. '57, of course,' said he, and paused a moment before saying: 'Turn to it and let me hear you read it.'

And then Adam found himself solemnly piping out the lines which he had first heard thundered by Mr O'Meagher in the room beyond the folding-doors.

THE DEAD LOVER.

'When that I was alive there were women that loved
me;
When that I was alive they loved only me;
And that I could do no wrong
Was the burden of the song
Of the dear good women that loved me.

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Now that I am dead, those good women that loved
me

Are sought by other lovers happily, O happily;
And in my narrow bed I can hear as I lie dead
Little feet that I have kissed dance lightly over me.

Yet though in my grave I lie, I laugh deliciously
At the foolish living lovers that are dancing over
me—

For the Queens of all their toasts are the cold and
careless ghosts

Of the women that have loved me and are lying dead
with me.'

'Well,' said Mr Macarthy, 'do you still admire that poem as much as you did last spring?'

Adam blushed. 'It's very nice,' said he, 'but I don't know that I rightly understand what it means.' He looked at his interlocutor. 'Would you mind telling me?'

'Heaven forbid!' declared Mr Macarthy, 'that I, a mere Irish man of letters from the high and windy hills, should presume to interpret the poetry of an Anglo-Norman baronet holding a commission in the army . . .

'But, sir,' Adam interrupted, 'wasn't he a kind of relation of yours?'

Mr Macarthy's eye travelled from Adam's face round the room until it appeared to rest on the crucifix. 'A kind of relation,' he repeated. 'Well, yes, I suppose he was, but he was much more nearly related to your friend Mrs Burns, so you'd better ask her.'

Adam ignored the advice in his excitement over the information. 'Mrs Burns?' he cried; 'and what sort of a relation was he to her?'

'Her father,' said Mr Macarthy, and Adam was so astonished that he forgot to ask any more questions on that day.

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He was profoundly impressed—so impressed that even that night, back in his own dear bed, which it was a pleasure to feel vibrate again with the boom of St George's bells, he found himself, though he faithfully got out his Keats and lit his bull's eye lantern, unable to concentrate his mind on any poetry but that of Sir David Byron-Quinn. The baronet was more than ever interesting as the presumptive grandfather of Barbara, who to-night leaped before his vision all green and gold as he had seen her from the doubtful security of the moorland pool. He determined to learn off all the baronet's poetry by heart; all of it that he could remember to-night he repeated until he fell asleep.

'And that I could do no wrong
Was the burden of the song
Of the dear good women that loved me.'

Chapter Seventeen

MORE OF SIR DAVID BYRON-QUINN

ADAM dreamed that first night of the Christmas holidays that he was living in what, for a boy born in the slums, was pretty good society. True, he was no longer a boy, in his dreams, but more or less grown up, nineteen or twenty—an age at which it appeared to him to be reasonable to marry and settle down. There he was, comfortably housed in the rector's room at Clongowes, with Barbara Burns as his wife, and magnificent portraits of her romantic and titled grandfather in every room (visible to his dream eye, as was also the staircase and well-chosen fragments of the school building, without leaving the apartment which Father Rector had placed at his disposal); and worthy of her grandfather Barbara looked; and worthily of him she behaved; for, while always her green and golden self, she was also at times the most attractive part of Josephine O'Meagher, and at other times had an allure which he had thought peculiar to Caroline Brady. It was a delicious dream; and when he woke he rubbed his eyes a long time, wondering how it could all have happened in that bare apartment where his fancy had placed it. It was a little sad to think that such a thing could never really happen. . . . Sadder still was it to reflect that there was no woman in the world who could combine the charms of Barbara Burns with those of Josephine O'Meagher and Caroline Brady. . . . But, when all was said and done, the joyous fact remained that the grandfather of Barbara Burns was not only a poet but a baronet. . . . He would ask Mr Macarthy. . . .

More of Sir David Byron Quinn

The recollection that Mr Macarthy was ill momentarily drove even the dreams of fair ladies and fashionable marriages from his mind, and he leaped out of bed, though it was barely daylight, determined to be early at Mountjoy Square. . . . As early as he had ever been. Remembering that Sir David Byron-Quinn, into whose family he was about to marry, had been an officer in the army—and somebody had told him that officers in the army always have cold baths—he emptied his jug into the hip-bath and spent some seconds in it. Drying himself, he fell into doubt as to whether, after all, even Barbara Burns was worth taking a cold tub in winter for . . . the Barbara Burns of his dream had been, but was the Barbara Burns of reality? . . . She was not Josephine O'Meagher and Caroline Brady too. Real life was a base and trivial thing compared with the life you lived in dreams. He was arguing with himself the possibility, provided you had not to work for your living, of passing your life in dreamland, when Miss Gannon in person brought him his breakfast.

It seemed to him a lovely breakfast, savoury eggs and bacon and lovely crisp brown bread with delicious butter that was quite fresh and yet a trifle salt, and piping hot tea with milk, which, if it looked a little blue and measly, was all right so long as you didn't look at it, and, anyhow, there were heaps of rich brown golden Demerara sugar to drown the taste of it. Adam was so pleased with his breakfast that, improving on his usual custom when alone, he said grace after it. He may have been prompted to this by a feeling of slight distention in his stomach, warning him to propitiate the gods.

When he reached Mountjoy Square, a motor-car was standing before the door, the only type of car which Adam knew by appearance, that faithful beast among motor-cars, more cursed and mishandled and generally abused than any other chariot that fought

Adam and Caroline

in the Great War, the one that pushed its bonnet furthest of all into the thick of fighting, going ninety times in a hundred where none other durst . . . a cheap and unfashionable car, such as no medical practitioner would use unless more interested in his patients than in his prestige: Adam guessed it to be the car of his guardian's doctor. It was a sharp wintry day, and the doctor had left the throttled engine running; Adam stood a moment watching it; he delighted in machinery, though his life had not thrown him in the way of understanding it; he asked himself why it was that the thing puffed and vibrated and yet made no attempt to move. . . . He came to the conclusion that it was held there by the brakes. . . . That seemed a wasteful way of doing things, and he suspected there might be some other explanation.

Then his mind ran on something Mr Macarthy had said about motors; he could not remember what it was or why it connected itself with the Index Expurgatorius; he knew what that was—a list of books the Pope forbade all Catholics to read. . . . And the queer thing was that some of these books were written by Jesuits; one priest he remembered himself, though he could not remember his name, was on the Index. If you read his books you might be damned. . . . It seemed a queer thing to look at a motor-car and think of being damned, especially of being damned for reading a book by a man who had taught you that you might be damned for reading somebody else's book. . . . There seemed to be something nonsensical in it somewhere; but to be damned was a serious thing: he wasn't going to run any risk of being damned by reading books contrary to faith. . . . It really wasn't good enough, especially when there seemed a fair chance of marrying the granddaughter of a baronet and living happily, you might say, more or less ever after. At this point the door opened and the doctor came down the steps, got into

More of Sir David Byron-Quinn

his car, and drove off. Adam was thrilled to observe that he was the same doctor who had attended him at the Mater Hospital years ago and sent him on that expedition to Bray which led to his meeting with Caroline Brady. Adam took it for granted that he would be recognised, but he was not. The doctor only said, rather sharply: 'Well, boy, have you never seen a motor before?' and gave Adam no time to explain the profound thoughts which moved him while contemplating the throbbing *chassis*; and yet he thought how interested the doctor would have been, and Sister too, to know that he who had come to them in such a deplorable condition was now contemplating matrimony with the grand-daughter of a baronet. He ascended to Mr Macarthy's rooms, and, after somewhat perfunctorily reassuring himself as to the condition of the patient, seized the first opportunity to say: 'By the way, sir, about that baronet . . .'

'Eh, what?' said Mr Macarthy shortly. 'About what baronet?'

'About Sir David Byron-Quinn,' said Adam: 'you were telling me about Sir David Byron-Quinn.'

'Oh, damn Sir David Byron-Quinn!' said Mr Macarthy: 'what does it matter about him?' He said this laughingly, but abruptly checked himself. 'Don't misunderstand me, Adam: I don't really wish poor David any harm; if there's anything in conventional religion, I feel more sorry for him than anything else. What did you want to ask about him?'

Now that it came to the point, Adam had difficulty in sorting out the questions that lay at the back of his mind, but he said at last: 'Is Babs really his grand-daughter?'

'Why shouldn't she be?' said Mr Macarthy.

Adam suspected, without knowing the reason for his suspicion, that this question was partly jocular. In schoolboy words, he advanced the proposition that

Adam and Caroline

the burden of proof lay with the person—that is to say, with Mr Macarthy himself—who propounded for his belief the statement that Barbara Burns, well-bred little lady though she might be, was the grand-daughter of so eminent a person, by reason both of birth and attainment, as the baronet who had perished with such dramatic completeness. To complete his argument, he said, 'She never told me he was her grandfather. . . . Never so much as mentioned his name.'

It was disconcerting of Mr Macarthy to reply: 'Did you mention to her the name of your grandfather?'

Adam frankly replied: 'No, but I should have if he'd been a baronet.'

Mr Macarthy was obviously impressed by this. . . . So much so that his head disappeared beneath the bed-clothes, and there was a pause in the conversation. But at length he said: 'Would you have mentioned him if he had been a poet?'

'I never thought of his being a poet,' Adam said, and added, reflectively: 'I don't think my father would have mentioned it if he had been a poet.'

'You forget,' said Mr Macarthy: 'Sir David was not the father of Mr Burns: he was the father of Barbara's mother.'

'I don't know who my mother's father was,' was all Adam replied to that; then he coloured and added hastily: 'I know he was a Mr Smith, but I never saw him.' His tone became quite cheerful as he appended to this statement: 'I often heard my mother say that she'd married beneath her.'

'She's not the only woman to claim that honour,' Mr Macarthy observed drily. He went on, with a smile: 'And they're quite right—every woman who marries at all, marries beneath her.'

'I suppose you might say that of Mrs Burns?' Adam suggested.

'I shouldn't,' Mr Macarthy murmured, 'but I dare say she might say it herself.'

More of Sir David Byron Quinn

Adam was unconscious of the irony in his elder's tone; he even nodded his head in acquiescence as he propounded: 'Mrs Burns is an elegant lady.'

Mr Macarthy was content to reply: 'Her husband is entirely of your opinion.'

'So is her daughter Babs,' said Adam.

'Meaning?' Mr Macarthy queried.

'I mean,' said Adam, 'that her daughter is an elegant lady, too'; he added thoughtfully: 'and younger.'

Mr Macarthy agreed that she was younger, but expressed no opinion of an argumentative nature; so Adam carried on the conversation by remarking: 'They never come to Mountjoy Square.'

'Don't they?' Mr Macarthy responded, in the tone of one without information on the subject.

'They don't,' Adam assured him. 'I have never seen them, I should remember if they had. . . . I've often wondered why they didn't.'

'Perhaps,' said Mr Macarthy dreamily, 'perhaps they are too elegant.'

Adam took this to mean that it would scarcely become a baronet's daughter and grand-daughter to visit a mere commoner residing in the upper half of a house in a square which he knew now to be no longer fashionable. It chilled a little the ardour of his hopes, but he ventured tentatively to observe: 'I think Mrs Burns likes me.'

'Youth goes to youth,' Mr Macarthy murmured.

'She's not so young as all that,' Adam protested.

Mr Macarthy's eyes distinctively twinkled notwithstanding the lethargy of his tone: 'How do you know? . . . Have you invited her to St George's Place?'

At last Adam chuckled a little bashfully. 'You're making game of me.'

'Am I?' said Mr Macarthy; and for the life of him Adam could not decide whether he was or was not. The thought really fastened in his mind that it would be pleasant to invite Mrs Burns to his little room, there

Adam and Caroline

to be alone with her for just a while. . . . He was not quite clear whether he wanted to see her about her daughter or just . . . Then visions of other visitors drifted into his mind, and the thought of some of them burnt deeper still. But his tongue never even touched their names. . . Unless it was Caroline Brady. Sitting there looking at Mr Macarthy across his bedstead, he could visualise his own little room and Caroline Brady in an enlarged reproduction of what she had been when he kissed her in Dalkey Tunnel, there before him. . . . With an effort of will he dismissed her from his mind that he might work back to the subject of the baronet: alive or dead, poor Caroline did not belong to that galley.

'About Sir David Byron-Quinn,' he began, and was pained to hear Mr Macarthy groan. He apologised for returning to the subject.

'Never mind,' said Mr Macarthy, 'carry on. . . . What do you want to know now?'

'I thought last night in bed,' said Adam, 'that I'd like to learn all his poetry off by heart.'

'The dickens!' said Mr Macarthy.

As this expletive did not amount to a command to stop, Adam proceeded. 'Of course, I know he wasn't a great poet; not like Shakespeare and Byron and Scott and,' his tongue went on mechanically, 'and Keats and Yeats . . .'

'No, nor Moody and Sankey,' Mr Macarthy murmured; but the point of this observation, if point it had, was lost on Adam.

'I should think, sir,' he suggested very cautiously, 'I should think you would be right in saying that he was a better poet or anyhow very near as good as Mr Tinkler.'

'As Mr Tinkler?' Mr Macarthy repeated with a questioning glance. 'What do you know about Mr Tinkler?'

Adam informed him how he had once been brought

More of Sir David Byron Quinn

to the Muses Club, where he had heard Mr Tinkler read certain of his verses.

'Oh,' said Mr Macarthy, and that was all he vouchsafed upon the subject of Mr Tinkler. Of Sir David he said that the man had been a genuine poet in intention, but not often an effective one in reality. 'Byron-Quinn,' said he, 'was your true amateur with the amateur's qualities and defects. Being a man of talent with no need to write for a living, he wrote nothing, so far as we know, that was beneath contempt: on the other hand, having no one to criticise him, no one but himself to please, and not being in an artistic sense self-critical, he wrote nothing or precious little, that will satisfy a man of taste. . . . Don't imagine that I set up to be a man of taste, but even I feel that the things of his which impressed me twenty years ago fail to impress me now.' He paused and passed his hand thoughtfully across his forehead. 'It may be that I shall be impressed by them again, but I think not.'

Adam, glowing with the satisfaction that his guardian was entering into a serious literary discussion with him, said, unconsciously imitating his tone: 'I was quite impressed when Mr O'Meagher recited "The Dead Lover" to us last spring.'

Mr Macarthy smiled, but answered in grave tones, 'And you were impressed when you read it for yourself here yesterday?'

'Not so much impressed,' said Adam guardedly, 'but, as I told you yesterday, I'm not sure that I know what it means. Do you?'

'And as I told you yesterday I don't pretend to know what it means,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but I take it to have been, possibly, in the poet's mind that while men have the power to love many women, women have the power to love only one man.'

'Oh,' said Adam, blushing he knew not why, 'Oh! Do you think that, too?'

Adam and Caroline

'For my part,' said Mr Macarthy, 'I conceive that the late Major Byron-Quinn may possibly have been wrong.' He looked at Adam quizzingly: 'Let me hear what you think about it yourself.'

'I think that he must have been a very conceited sort of fellow,' Adam promptly responded.

'That one may presume is the view of the world,' said Mr Macarthy, 'and it is scarcely for me to say it is not right—yet I happen to know that the poet's boast is true of at least one woman; for she makes no secret of it.'

'Who's that?' asked Adam.

Said Mr Macarthy: 'Never mind.'

Ordinarily Adam would have taken those two words as a definite closing of the audience, but he sat still a little while sunk in thought until he asked at last in a hushed voice: 'Is that lady dead?'

Mr Macarthy turned over on his side and put his hand over his eyes, as though shutting out the sunlight. Adam thought he did not mean to answer him, but at last the words came slowly: 'No, she is not exactly dead: but so changed out of all recognition, even since I first knew her, that if she were to meet her dead lover to-night, he would turn away from her in disgust.'

Adam felt a tremor between excitement and horror. 'It was the Marchesa,' he blurted.

'Never mind who it was,' said Mr Macarthy sternly, and Adam rose to go, feeling this to be definitely a dismissal; but as he was leaving the room his guardian called him back to say: 'I was unjust to Sir David Byron-Quinn: he would not turn away from any woman with disgust. . . . Not in any circumstances whatever. He had his faults, but he was not that sort of man.'

Chapter Eighteen

OF A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

CHRISTMAS DAY fell on a Wednesday. Adam, paying his third visit to his guardian on the previous Monday, found him up, and on Tuesday he declared himself well enough, though the doctor appeared of a contrary opinion, to go out. As a compromise with his medical adviser, he promised to be back before nightfall; but, with Adam as a companion, Christmas shopping did not allow him to keep this promise. Darkness had already fallen before they were clear of Grafton Street, on their return journey. Working their way through the crowd outside Hollander's, they ran into the arms, or at least Adam ran into the arms, of the Marchesa. Kissing him affectionately, she cried: 'Happy Christmas! I heard you were home from that horrible school. How hateful all schools are, even boys' schools, though I should prefer them to my own. . . . St Enda's is all right'—she turned to Mr Macarthy: 'Why didn't you send him to St Enda's?'

'For too many reasons to tell you now,' said Mr Macarthy calmly.

'Your reasons are always nonsensical,' the Marchesa declared, 'but I suppose you're right: you always are.'

'Sometimes,' said Mr Macarthy.

'Don't be so vain!' cried the Marchesa. She appealed to Adam, pointing her finger at his guardian: 'Isn't he awfully vain? Don't you find him so? Of course you do.'

In point of fact Adam sometimes did, but he was glad, for more than one reason, when the Marchesa

Adam and Caroline

went on, without giving him time to answer her question: 'I've often thought of you while you were away; I was thinking of you this very day—in fact, I was thinking of you just now, for I'd been buying a Christmas present for you; I hope you'll find it when you get home . . . What are you looking at?'

Adam did not quite know what he was looking at, but he knew who had been looking at him, though with eyes that held no recognition . . . Caroline Brady, dressed, like a grown-up little lady, in the height of fashion, as he conceived the height of fashion to be. But where was she? Where had he seen her? He dared not say; for it appeared to him that he had seen her inside the glass front of Hollander's window.

. . . This his common sense, or what he called his common sense, told him must have been a delusion; for Caroline Brady simply could not have been inside Hollander's window. . . . What could she have been doing there? Nothing. His vision of the window was blocked by the crowd around it. He had caught only a fleeting glimpse of her. . . . The crowd opened again and he had another such glimpse of the window, but there was no Caroline Brady to be seen. His mind worked back to the more tangible joy of the Marchesa's present. He tried to speak of it, but, piqued by his off-handed manner when she told him of it, she bade him and his guardian good-bye.

Adam almost reproached himself with allowing his attention to be distracted from the Marchesa even by the appearance, real or fanciful, of Caroline Brady. As they climbed on a tram at the corner of Suffolk Street, he recalled that once before, on his very birthday it was, Caroline Brady's ghost had come between him and the Marchesa. . . . Worse than that, had come between him and the Marchesa and Barbara Burns too. . . . It was uncanny to think that Caroline Brady's ghost should have the power to do this: it made it seem such a real ghost, animated by a sort of

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deliberate, and possibly sinister, intention. As the tram lumbered slowly and heavily (being a Kingstown tram, and almost too ponderous and long in the wheel base for some of those curves round Trinity College) Adam, innocent little boy though he looked, even to the not unobservant Mr Macarthy, was asking himself whether the ghost of Caroline Brady could possibly be inspired by jealousy of his acquaintance with a baronet's grand-daughter and a baronet's . . . He was not quite sure of the correct word to describe the Marchesa's relationship to the author of 'The Dead Lover.' He opened his lips to broach the question to Mr Macarthy, but checked himself in time, remembering that this branch of the Tree of Knowledge bore forbidden fruit. So, as Mr Macarthy had turned his ear, expecting him to say something, he said: 'I wonder what sort of a present the Marchesa has given me.'

Not very promisingly, Mr Macarthy made answer: 'So do I.'

'Do you think it would be a box of soldiers?' Adam suggested.

'More likely a box of infant druids,' Mr Macarthy replied.

Mildly surprised, Adam said: 'I didn't know you could buy that sort of thing.'

'It's wonderful what you can buy,' said Mr Macarthy.

Adam's full interest was aroused. 'But can you buy infant druids?' he said.

Mr. Macarthy only answered: 'I don't think I could every bring myself to try.'

But the idea pleased Adam, and he would not readily let go of it. 'What do you think infant druids would be like if you could buy them?' he insisted.

'I shouldn't think that they would in any circumstances be like infant druids,' Mr Macarthy said gravely; and this gave Adam food for thought, which kept him silent until they left the tram at Findlater's

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Church. Together they walked up Gardiner's Row and passed Belvedere. As they were approaching it Adam fell into a little laugh, a laugh of sheer happiness to think what a different world was his since a year ago; then, suddenly, the laughter stilled, and he caught at Mr Macarthy's arm.

The latter looked down at him alarmed. 'What's the matter?' he said.

Adam answered nothing, but stood stock still holding his companion to him; in the gloom of the full night a priestly form emerged from nowhere, ascended the steps and disappeared again through the doorway. The dull bang of the heavy door released Adam from what seemed to his companion almost a nervous seizure, and the two stepped out again. Mr Macarthy walked with him as far as St George's Place, asking no question; but, as he bade him good-night, he said: 'Happy Christmas, Adam. Come to me as early as you can to-morrow and have no bad dreams to-night. Christmas should be a joyful time for children, and after all you are a child still, aren't you?'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam, 'I am. Thank you . . .' he was going to say 'your honour,' but checked himself half-consciously, ending the phrase: 'Thanks to you, sir, and God bless you.'

Mr Macarthy lingered a moment, and perhaps it was the cold air made him cough, then turning resolutely to go, he said in a low clear voice: 'One thing more, Adam, a piece of advice from an old man; perhaps more than most boys of your age you have suffered at the hands of others, certainly you have suffered badly at the hands of a man we both saw just now. It may be, and I am willing to believe, that you have fully forgiven him, for otherwise you could not honestly have fulfilled your religious duties as you seem to have done; but in any case I tell you this, so long as you feel the tiniest resentment towards any creature on God's earth, man or beast, you will

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never know any real happiness.' Then he stooped and kissed Adam on the forehead. 'Happy Christmas!' he repeated, and strode off.

Tearfully bewildered Adam ascended to his own little room, vaguely cheered by a comparatively luscious smell from the kitchen and a sort of peppering of holly and ivy in and about the mean staircase: it was encouraging to know that even Miss Gannon felt, or suffered *Attracta* to feel, the atmosphere of Christmas. Always susceptible to kindly suggestion, he had a momentary idea of rushing out to buy a Christmas card with a motto about Christmas being the time for forgiveness (if such a rarity might be obtained locally) and delivering it himself at Belvedere addressed to Father Tudor, with the legend 'From You Know Who' on the back. For two reasons this seemed to him attractive: firstly, it would please Mr Macarthy, and secondly it would annoy Father Tudor. . . . But this he reflected, might not be true forgiveness of the kind that makes you properly happy. . . . It would be fun, but fun was not strictly speaking happiness. . . 'What's fun to you,' said the frog. . . . At this point he entered his room and perceived on his table that which drove Father Tudor out of his mind; it was the Marchesa's present. He felt aggrieved at the size of the parcel, it seemed much too small to be worthy of a lady of title. Taking from his pocket a penknife of varied accomplishments (that morning arrived from Columba and Patrick O'Meagher) he cut the string. . . . The Marchesa's present was a book . . . it was . . . he rubbed his eyes, stared at it, thought there was some mistake about it until he read his name (spelt *Madfaden*) on the fly-leaf, it was *Aftermath* by David Byron-Quinn.

For a moment he threw it down, not feeling in the mood for poetry, while he examined his other presents, the conventional presents of boyhood, things for the cricket and football field, surprisingly many of them

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for a boy who a year ago had had no friends. Last year there had been but two presents, one from Father Innocent and one from the O'Meaghers. Even Mr O'Toole had sent him a present this Christmas, it was a book (how pleased Mr O'Toole would have been to know that his present took the same form as the Marchesa's), a handsomely bound book entitled: *The Young Gentleman's Guide to Good Society*, by an authority who modestly veiled his personality under the style 'A Public School Master.' Adam had enough sense to perceive at once that this book, despite the attractive binding, had better be concealed. He liked it none the better for certain shaky but extremely legible writing within it which bore witness that it was 'A Christmas present from Byron O'Toole, Esq., to his godson Byron O'Toole Wyndham Macfadden, Esq.'

Adam turned his back on all his presents and sat down by the fire, sat there very moodily, for it was a queer thing that even through the medium of a book and a well-bound book; a book, to judge by the number of editions it was advertised to have gone through, more successful than all but a very few literary masterpieces, his godfather had flung a sinister shadow into that little room. . . . It was bad enough that Father Tudor should have crossed his path to-night: luckily Mr Macarthy had been with him as a true guardian to make light of the fear of him and as it were exorcise the demonic part of him. Coming upstairs he had quite made up his mind that he would regard Father Tudor, not as the tormenting devil who still haunted his dreams, but just as a sort of cruel freak to be pitied (as Mr Behre had once said) and so far as Christian piety would allow it, despised. . . . But when Adam received any token whatever to remind him that he was still under the patronage of Mr Byron O'Toole, he felt himself not in a position to despise anyone. . . . He asked himself what Barbara Burns would think if she came across that book and

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learnt that Mr Byron O'Toole was his godfather . . . his godfather and that because he was his mother's friend. . . . What would she think? She, the granddaughter of Sir David Byron-Quinn? . . . And what would the Marchesa think? . . . What would she think of the relations between his mother and Mr O'Toole? . . . Odd that she and Mr O'Toole had both given him books. . . . What a world apart the two were! . . . If they ever met, and perhaps they had met in the past, for Mr O'Toole had boasted of the days when he had enjoyed the intimacy of Dublin Castle, with all the abandon of an extra waiter, and the Marchesa, too, he knew used to go there in her salad days when she was painting the portrait of David Byron-Quinn. . . . David Byron-Quinn whom she still talked of as a living influence on her life (as he would have talked, if he dared, of Josephine O'Meagher being an influence on his own), but who, according to Mr Macarthy would not know her if he came to life again. . . . That was a terrible thing to think of: a beautiful woman growing old without dignity. . . . No, he wronged the Marchesa, she was not without dignity, but it was a crazy, crumpled sort of dignity, like so many of the beautiful old houses he had seen crumbling more and more into a feverish decay: he almost likened the erstwhile Lady Daphne Page to such a ruinous tenement house as Mountjoy Court, where his godfather had once lived with Miss or Mrs Robinson and his own father had crashed to his death through the rotten staircase.

He wondered why the Marchesa, whose life was such a maddening failure to think upon, never appeared to him to be otherwise than cheerful when he met her: to think of her was infinitely sad, but to meet her was, on the whole, rather exhilarating: he distinctly liked meeting her: he did not share that fear which Mr O'Meagher and others confessed themselves to have of her. . . . He did not like her as much

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as Mrs Burns, for the simple reason that Mrs Burns was overwhelmingly brilliant and beautiful, but, on the whole, he would rather talk to her than to Mrs Burns. He could not say why, but he liked talking to the Marchesa . . . perhaps that was because she was so ready to talk about Sir David Byron-Quinn. . . . And yet, Sir David Byron-Quinn was Mrs Burns's own father, who never mentioned him. He asked himself why Mrs Burns never mentioned her father: he had a notion that Mrs Burns was the sort of lady who would be proud to have a poet for a father. . . . He had even heard her say that she was proud to have Mr Tinkler as a friend, and the baronet's poems, he felt instinctively, could knock spots off Tinkler's.

Taking up his Christmas present from the Marchesa, to confirm this opinion, there came into his mind his conversation with his guardian on the subject of his merits. . . . He remembered, too, that when his guardian wished him to turn to the poem of 'The Dead Lover,' which was on page 57, he had inadvertently said, 'Turn to page 76.' It occurred to Adam that that number, though not the one he intended, had not come into his head purely by chance; so Adam turned to page 76, and was rewarded by finding there a poem that he recognised—the last sonnet, the one which Sir David was said to have written in the desert of Kordofan the night before he was slain: that was in January, 1885, nearly thirty years ago. Adam read it through, first silently, and then, strangely moved by it, he solemnly recited it:

THE LAST PENITENCE.

' Here, in the dark of the desert, that ultimate night
That hangs upon Africa, drowning the memory of
day,
Making Egyptian darkness itself as broad light,
I kneel me in mystery to pray.

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Not to Osiris I turn, the sleek lord of the sun :

Nor to old Jupiter, jovial and hotheaded god :

Nor to Jehovah, the bilious, mean-spirited one.

I seek not a heavenly crown, and I fear not the
rod.

Let them ride their celestial hippogriffs over my
corse . . .

Until my soul die, the smile of disdain shall not fade.
Not for the gods have I a thought of remorse.

Only of him who may follow me am I afraid. . . .

If thou art he, I beg thee abject to forgive
Him that lies dead, for the folly that called
thee to live.'

He repeated it aloud once again; Attracta, bringing him up his dinner, could hear him from the staircase, and was extremely alarmed; for, although she could not parse the dead baronet's verse, she gathered enough of its tenor to suspect that it was impious.

'Oh, Master Adam!' she cried, putting down the tray with a bang, 'you ought not to say such things on Christmas Eve; if Miss Gannon heard you she wouldn't let you come and light the Christmas candle, and that would be a pity, wouldn't it?' Adam waved the book at her.

'What have you got there?' said she: 'is it that has the bad words?'

'Come here and look at it,' said Adam, and, as she approached, opened it at the frontispiece.

Attracta was charmed. 'Oh, isn't he the lovely gentleman?' she cried. 'And the humbuggin' eyes of him!' Then she recoiled with a shriek.

'What's the matter?' said Adam, dropping the book.

'Didn't you see, didn't you see him?' she gasped.

Something cold passed down Adam's back as he picked the book up. 'I didn't see anything,' he said.

'I saw,' Attracta declared emphatically, 'he was looking right at you and trying to speak.'

Chapter Nineteen

THE WITCHING HOUR

FOR a small boy, and more particularly one brought up under the shadow of the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, Adam was not superstitious: as the craven and ghastly terrors of his infancy had been left behind in the saner atmosphere of Mr Macarthy and Herr Behre—though even Father Innocent had struggled as best he knew how to eliminate from his God the taint of demonology—Adam was gathering strength to question the appearance and right of any mere bogey to cast spells on him. Also he had no respect, despite his affection, for *Attracta*: he considered her to be hardly better than feeble-minded, and, in fact, she did belong to that class in Ireland, of the very lowest order of intelligence . . . temperamentally a slave, unfit for any other occupation.

'Pooh!' said Adam stoutly, staring the portrait boldly in the face, 'you're silly to be frightened of a picture; this old chap died—he was killed, you know, in Africa—years and years before I was born. Just look at it again.'

'Not for anything,' she protested, shrinking from the proffered book. 'I don't know anything about him, but I seen his photo looking at you right enough, and I tell you he's trying to talk to you. . . . And, anyhow, there's your dinner.'

She left the room a little offended at Adam's refusal to be frightened, and, oddly enough, after she was gone, Adam was conscious of not liking to be left alone with the book. He shut it up, and ate his dinner

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hastily, so that he might ring for her to come back again. . . . He was very pleased to be summoned downstairs presently to light the Christmas candle, and spoke the accompanying prayers with unusual reverence. This ceremony took place in the kitchen, which on this occasion seemed to him to look cheerful. He made an excuse to dawdle there for a long time, patting St Kevin and wishing him a Happy Christmas.

'It's no use your doing that,' Miss Gannon protested: 'cats have no souls.'

'Are you sure?' Adam asked.

'Of course I'm sure,' she snapped.

'But how do you know?' he returned.

She turned on him: 'Well, now, for you to ask that; why, even poor Attracta there knows better than to think any animal would be having a soul.'

'But you and Attracta are both animals,' Adam said, without meaning to be offensive, but he saw at once that he had made a mistake. Miss Gannon actually reddened.

'Is that what they teach you at Clongowes?' she said—'to insult a lady? That's the last Christmas candle you'll light in this kitchen,' and she made an effort to puff it out, but happily failed; for it would have been unlucky thus to extinguish it.

'You don't understand,' Adam retorted; 'I'm an animal just as much as you.'

'Speak for yourself,' snarled Miss Gannon; 'I'm not an animal, and never was, and never will be; and if I ever find that Attracta's an animal, out she goes, bag and baggage!'

'But if you're not an animal,' Adam argued, really anxious to conciliate her, though not, perhaps, very tactful: 'if you're not an animal, what on earth are you?'

'What on earth am I?' Miss Gannon repeated scornfully; 'that's a question to ask me!'

Adam began to lose patience with her denseness:

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'You see, you don't know what you are. . . . You really don't, Miss Gannon. . . . It's no use pretending that you do.'

In her indignation, Miss Gannon made a further effort to extinguish the Christmas candle, and again failed. 'I suppose you'd say,' she spluttered, 'that your own mother was an animal?'

'Of course she was,' Adam eagerly returned; 'all women are animals . . . they're . . .' he made a great effort of memory, 'they're mammalia.'

This word had a staggering effect on Miss Gannon. 'What's a mammalia?' she gasped.

Adam, suddenly recalling what it was, blushed at the notion of defining the term to Miss Gannon. 'It's the plural of mammal,' he said, 'and every female of a certain kind is a mammal. You're a mammal, Attracta's a mammal, my mother is a mammal. . . . Even the Blessed Virgin herself was probably a mammal.'

'Oh!' said Miss Gannon, mollified, and even, perhaps, exalted, at the notion of being placed in the same category with the Blessed Virgin. 'She was, was she? Did they tell you that at Clongowes?'

Adam was not prepared to give a direct answer to this question. 'I read it there in a book,' said he

Miss Gannon looked at him suspiciously: 'But didn't you go and say that you were a mammal too?' she asked.

Adam saw the difficulty, and was anxious to close the conversation. 'I think I'm a mammal,' said he, 'but I forget how.'

Miss Gannon snorted triumphantly: 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,' said she, and, content with having the last word, she allowed him to depart in peace, the Christmas candle still burning.

For his part, Adam was glad enough to avoid further zoological argument, though loth to leave the

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kitchen, with the cheering reflections from its well-polished metals, the curiously consoling companionship of St Kevin, more intelligent than Attracta, more human than Miss Gannon, and the evil-exorcising beams of the Christmas candle, to climb the mean staircase, which, there being no one in on the intermediate floors, rang hollow, as he fancied, climbing to his lonely little room, where the portrait of that charming but wicked baronet, who had come to such an untimely end after saying such deplorably incautious things, was waiting to tempt him to look at it. Before he reached the mid-way of the last flight, he had ceased to think of mammalia or any other scientific thought, and was concerned only with the finding of some excuse for going downstairs again. . . . But none occurred to him, and he stood with his fingers shaking the handle of his door, unable to summon up resolution to open it, and wishing, firstly, that the Marchesa had not presented him with Sir David Byron-Quinn's poems, and, alternately, that he had not shown them to Attracta. . . . He felt a resentment against the whole female sex because of these two who had so unmanned him. . . . St George's bells struck ten: it was two hours still to midnight, and, reflecting that ghosts were said not to be allowed out much earlier than that, he opened his door and walked in.

His heart jumped into his mouth. . . . There was someone sitting by the fire. Suppressing a scream, he clung to the door.

'Ach!' said Herr Behre, 'you look as one who has seen a ghost. You do not, I hope, resent my intrusion?'

Adam eyed him as he sat there by the fire, with *Aftermath* open on his lap. 'I didn't hear you come in,' Adam babbled; 'I thought you were a burglar.'

'And you have many riches,' said Herr Behre drily. 'A sporting Irish burglar would be glad of a football,

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but I am a German of the before-sporting period, and I came not to burgle your football. Had I the burgling art, I might, perhaps, rob you of this'—and he waved the book of verses.

'Oh, please take it—do,' said Adam eagerly.

Fond as was the German of his little friend, he was not prepared for such generosity. 'What is this now?' he ejaculated, 'that you would give away what you have but just received?'

'Oh, I didn't quite mean to give it away,' Adam hastened to assure him; 'of course I wouldn't do that with a present from the Marchesa della Venasalvatica: it was she gave it to me, you know.'

Herr Behre smiled grimly. 'I know,' said he, 'it has for a long time been her habitude.'

'Oh,' murmured Adam, almost crestfallen, 'did she give you one too?'

'Me? No,' said the musician, 'or why should I covet your copy?'

Adam was unprepared to answer this, so he asked a question instead: 'You have never read them, then?'

'Yes and no,' said the musician; 'I have taken the book up here and there, but I have never done so with the respect that one owes to a poet that is worth reading at all.'

'I suppose he was worth reading?' Adam asked.

'I think,' said Herr Behre a little doubtfully, 'I think he may have been. It is all a question of time and opportunity; I conceive that it would not be shameful to be found dead reading these poems.'

'Ah,' said Adam, and drew a long breath. He sat down at the opposite side of the fire and looked questioningly at his visitor. 'Then you don't think either that he need have been ashamed to be found dead after writing one of them?'

The musician stroked his beard thoughtfully. 'That rather depends upon which one,' he said.

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'I was thinking,' said Adam, 'of the one he wrote the night before he was killed. . . . It's on page 76,' he added, as he saw the musician turning to look for it.

Herr Behre read it gravely aloud, and Adam gradually found himself convulsed with laughter; for it sounded to him merely ridiculous to hear the good man passionately chanting such lines as 'Leddem rite dare zelezdial hibbocriffes ofer my gorse' and 'I beck dee apshect do forkiff him dat lice tett for de folly dat calt dee do liff.' He was sharply sobered when Herr Behre said reproachfully: 'What is there to laugh at in that?'

So foolish did he feel himself for laughing at it that he subconsciously covered his confusion with a lie. 'I was laughing,' said he, 'because Attracta was frightened by the portrait of the author at the beginning of the book.'

The musician turned to it. 'I see,' said he: 'she was frightened because it looked like you.'

'Looked at me,' Adam corrected him; 'Attracta said she saw him looking at me and trying to speak.'

'Humph!' said Herr Behre; 'I had not thought the good Attracta would have psychic power; but who am I to judge Attracta?'

Adam asked breathlessly: 'You think, then, that she really saw something I could not see?'

The musician smiled. 'I would not go so far as to say that, but I can imagine that even in death the gallant baronet would find it less trouble to manifest himself to a woman than to a man.'

'But,' said Adam, 'she said he was trying to look at me and trying to speak to me?'

Herr Behre's look was inscrutable. He only said: 'That may have been Attracta's modesty.'

Adam laughed; for he could not but be pleased at the notion of the whilom lover of the Marchesa, the father of Mrs Burns and grandfather of Barbara,

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attempting to pay court in this roundabout manner to poor Attracta.

'Why do you laugh now?' asked Herr Behre.

'At your joke about the baronet making love to Attracta.'

Said Herr Behre grimly: 'If the baronet, even through the medium of a bad reproduction of a faulty portrait, made love to Attracta, I imagine it would be no joke for her.'

Adam unexpectedly felt the chill down his spine again. 'But do you think that possible?' he asked.

Herr Behre shrugged his shoulders. 'Has not Mr Macarthy taught you that no wise man ever says what is possible or impossible?'

Adam confessed that Mr Macarthy appeared to believe almost everything was possible except what other people believed in. 'But do you think,' he suggested eagerly, 'that the baronet could really be trying to talk to me?'

Herr Behre looked from the portrait to page 76 and back again to the portrait. 'That last poem does appear to be addressed to somebody, doesn't it?' he asked. 'What do you understand by it yourself?'

Adam looked at the words over Herr Behre's shoulder. Conscientiously he paraphrased the whole sonnet, and said at last: 'It's addressed to him who comes after him, whoever that may be.'

'Presumably,' said Herr Behre, 'he is addressing himself to his heir.'

'His heir?' Adam repeated. 'D'you mean his son?'

'His son,' said Herr Behre, nodding, 'or it might be his grandson.'

As Herr Behre expressed the opinion that the baronet's last poem might have been addressed not merely to his son but to the son of that son, the bells of St George's Church were chiming the half hour; and, with the irresponsibility of youth, Adam, hearing

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the clock strike, was reminded that among his presents was a wrist-watch given him by Mr Macarthy, which he had not yet regarded with more than a passing glance—for Attracta had somehow banished the thought of Christmas presents from his mind. Now the thought of that watch distracted him from Herr Behre's answer to his own question. . . . After all, Adam was not the old gentleman's son, nor yet his grandson; he might regret that he was not, for it would have been pleasant to be a member of the aristocracy, but it was no use pretending that he was; Adam had no pleasure in letting his mind run on the subject of his parentage; so, saying by way of excuse, 'I wonder what the time is,' he opened the parcel containing his watch and put it on his wrist. 'Fancy,' he said, 'it's half past eleven.'

'Half past eleven,' said Herr Behre, and sighed. 'Time for little boys to be in bed.'

Adam suppressed a yawn that he might say: 'It's quite early still'; then he noticed that Mr Macarthy's card had been enclosed in the parcel and that there were some lines of writing on it. He carried them over to the gas jet by the fireplace to read: 'Do you remember the two quotations from St Matthew in the first lesson of the Catechism?'

Herr Behre, hearing him mumble, asked him what it was, and he replied that his guardian asked him if he remembered two quotations from the Catechism. Herr Behre knitted his brows with a puzzled air. 'What has Mr Macarthy to do with the Catechism?' he asked.

Adam in his turn was puzzled. 'He's a Catholic,' said he, 'and every Catholic has to know the Catechism.'

Herr Behre smiled. 'I think I know a few Catholics,' said he, 'but not a great many who know the Ten Commandments.'

Adam was shocked, and made no attempt to conceal

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it. 'I don't know many who know it better than myself,' said he, 'but they're all taught it, and Mr Macarthy knows it better than I do.'

Herr Behre admitted that Mr Macarthy knew most things better than other people. 'But this is the first time,' said he, 'that I have heard of him referring to the Catechism. What are the two quotations?'

Adam answered promptly: 'The first is Matthew xii. 36, and the second is also Matthew xix. 26.'

'That would say to me absolutely nothing,' said Herr Behre, then before Adam could reply he put up his hand, 'Wait a moment.' For a moment he sat buried in thought: then, with both hands pressed to his forehead, his eyes closed and thumbs upon his ears he chanted: 'Ich sage euch aber, das die Menschen müssen Rechenschaft geben am Jüngsten Gericht von einem jéglichen unnützen Wort, das sie geredet haben.' He looked up: 'Is that it, eh? He's cautioning you against idle words?'

'That's it,' said Adam. "'And every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.'"

'Good,' said Herr Behre, 'and now what's the number of the other one?'

'Matthew xix., 26,' Adam told him, his interest roused by the musician's exhibition of the latent powers of memory.

Herr Behre muttered under his breath: 'Matthai Neunzehn, Sechszwanzig,' then he said aloud: 'Es ist leichter, das ein Kameel durch ein Nadelohr gehé——' he broke off, 'Nein, nein, das ist es nicht,' and tried again. 'Jesus aber sahe sie an, und sprach zu ihnen: "Bei den Menschen ist es unmöglich, aber bei Gott sind alle Dinge möglich.'"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Adam, anxious to air his little knowledge of German, cried out: 'That's it, you got it again. "With God all things are possible.'"

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'Ha!' said Herr Behre between pride and weariness drawing a deep breath, 'So I knew Mr Macarthy's two quotations after all, at any rate as I read them once in grand old Martin Luther's Bible.'

'Grand old Martin Luther?' Adam repeated aghast, 'Do you really mean "grand old——"' he stopped dead, he was too astonished to repeat the name again.

'That's what Robert Browning calls him,' Herr Behre informed him, 'though I don't know that I quite agree with him. He was a sychophant of princes and a time-server and as bigoted himself as the worst of the bigots he fought against, but he did do something to make German a real language and for that I feel grateful to him.'

'Oh,' said Adam, 'I thought he was just a bad priest.'

Herr Behre looked at him and grunted: 'The worse the better.' Then he added in a milder tone: 'No, you must not take me to mean that; there is nothing better perhaps of its kind than a good priest, such as your friend Father Innocent. But,' he added gravely, 'to be a priest at all is a great temptation to be bad.'

'How is it a temptation to be bad?' Adam asked, for no one had put this view of Sacerdotalism before him. He knew that priests could be bad, but he thought they would have been still worse if they had not been priests.

Herr Behre told him: 'Because the priest represents himself as an agent appointed directly by God to exercise His will on those who are not priests.'

'Oh,' said Adam, 'and you think that their being appointed by God is all imaginary?'

'I think that God himself is imaginary,' said Herr Behre.

It seemed to Adam that the room was swimming round him. 'God . . . imaginary!' he ejaculated.

Herr Behre smiled at him reassuringly. 'Don't be alarmed, I do not blaspheme. There is a God, I well believe, and not a God made of protoplasm.'

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'What's protoplasm?' Adam broke in, anxious even at this moment of dread to add a new word of such interesting purport to his vocabulary.

But Herr Behre declined to be drawn into a definition of the word. 'It is too late for that,' he alleged. 'Both of us little boys must go to bed, but I would have you understand that when I say God is imaginary, I only mean that our conception of God is arrived at through our imagination, I mean the imaginations of our great poets, such as that Jewish gentleman who was content to write under the pseudonym of "Moses."'

The Dustman, called Morpheus, added to the mystification with which even at the best of times this speech would have overwhelmed Adam. He murmured rather drowsily: 'I suppose the baronet was not such a great poet as all that?'

Said Herr Behre: 'He was poet enough to have his own conception of God, but not poet enough, it would seem, to have a great conception of Him? and yet, who knows?'—he fell silent—then, looking in the fire, repeated: 'Who knows, who knows?' There was again silence, and, still looking in the fire, Adam thought, as if he saw Sir David burning in the heart of hell, 'His last thought of God was a bitter one, but not so bitter as his thought of himself . . . his case no man must judge.' He turned to the book of verses again, and read in a tone in which Adam now found nothing to laugh:

'Only of him who may follow me am I afraid. . . .

If thou art he, I beg thee abject to forgive

Him that lies dead, for the folly that called thee
to live.'

There was a long silence, and Adam's head was drooping on his breast, and he was wondering whether he had not heard himself snore, when he felt the

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musician take him on his knee. 'Say now to me,' said he, 'if you were the poet's son or grandson, would you forgive him for bringing you into the world?'

Adam rubbed his eyes and looked up, startled, into his questioner's face. 'There's nothing to forgive,' said he; 'I'm jolly glad to be alive.' He yawned. 'But I don't understand; what's it all about?' Then he fell asleep in Herr Behre's arms, lulled by the distant bells ringing their first joyous peal for the coming of Christmas Day. Then the heavier bells of St George's, so near at hand, roused him enough for him to undress himself, with the aid of Herr Behre, who kissed his forehead and his hands, and, blowing out the candle, wished him a Happy Christmas and Good-night. He had no bad dreams.

Chapter Twenty

OF DEATH AND BURIAL

THAT Christmas morning of his fourteenth year Adam awoke at the agreeable hour, for that time of the season, of a quarter to eight o'clock, so that, without jumping out of bed at once, he could, nevertheless, be up and doing before the sun. Owing, however, to his feeling particularly well-satisfied with himself, he allowed the sun to beat him by twenty minutes, and he was still dressing at a quarter to nine. Still, he enjoyed his breakfast, for he felt his virtue to be so great as to cover his unpunctuality. He did not remember everything that had passed the day before, but he recollected that he had forgiven Father Tudor (or at any rate he said to himself that he had), and he had also offered to forgive Sir David Byron-Quinn, in the event, admittedly improbable, of there being anything to forgive. There was something peculiarly gratifying in the thought that he might be privileged to forgive a baronet for being his grandfather. . . . Then he had the sense to laugh at himself as he recalled the impossibility of that baronet being his grandfather. Baronets do not have grandchildren born in the slums. . . . The recollection that he had been born in the slums sobered, and even saddened him, until, looking round the room, he was cheered again, particularly when he saw the pile of his presents, to reflect upon the difference between the hideous past and the cosy present. He determined to dismiss from his mind all hankerings after gentility of pedigree, and to show his gratitude to those who were good to

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him by gentility of conduct. Attracta had brought him his breakfast, and they had exchanged greetings. He now went downstairs to wish Miss Gannon herself a Happy Christmas. She was almost moved to kiss him, but, fortunately, the saints said 'No.' She suggested that Adam should likewise carry his salutations to Mr Murphy, on the first floor, but this was asking too much of him; the odour that hung about that whiskified scion of the law was loathsome to him; pretending to think that he was asleep, he went upstairs past his door, and on to Herr Behre's.

Herr Behre was at his piano, pensively harmonising an ancient French carol, while he whispered rather than sang the words to himself.

Adam, sitting there warming his hands by the fire, realised that, as he played, this whispered chant had an extraordinary quality of emotion: he wondered that Herr Behre, who apparently did not believe in Christianity, could be so affected by a song about Christ . . . should be willing, indeed, to have any truck with Christ at all. But, somehow, he did not ask Mr Behre any question on this subject, but presently stole away so quietly that the musician, not hearing his movement, played on his unbroken melody.

Returning to his room, Adam dressed himself with particular care, and at half past eleven, rather earlier than usual, started out to pick up Mr Macarthy at Mountjoy Square. In Gardiner's Place he was fortunate to encounter Dr Hillingdon-Ryde, not too belated to stop to shake his hand and wish him a Happy Christmas. 'You look,' said the big man, 'as if you were happy. Thank God!'

Adam certainly had the intention of thanking God, but he felt it would be only fair to thank Herr Behre and several others too: it was an intricate matter, this proper allocation of thanks between mortals and immortals, but he supposed that God should have the

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lion's share. . . . At any rate, it would be on the safe side to give it to Him.

Mr Macarthy smiled to see Adam. 'I think I know,' said he, 'who is a happy boy this morning.' And Adam blushed and would have liked to tell him of the virtuous acts which made him happy, but decided that he had better leave well alone; so to Gardiner Street Church they went, silently, arm in arm, and had the good fortune to hear an excellent sermon from Father Ignatius Steele.

The mood of Christmas was essentially the mood for Father Steele: it best inspired his pellucid and benevolent intelligence. 'My brethren,' he said in effect, 'he that speaks to you is not a scholar—the higher domains of theology are closed to him; he may not roam there, plucking out the finest flower of the convincing arguments which have sufficed to convince all but those whom pride has swept beyond the possibility of conviction, or, better let me say, the immediate probability of conviction, of the truth of the Christian religion as it has been expounded through the unbroken tradition of our Holy Church. . . . I am no scholiast. . . . But this I say to you: that for me it is enough to believe that God Himself came into the world to manifest Himself to us as a little child, and it is for us to go forth to meet Him by becoming again little children in His Holy Name, the name of Jesus Christ. . . .'

That was just how Adam felt as he sat there listening to his admired preacher's persuasive tone, seemingly harmonised with the *Adeste Fidelis* still echoing in his ears; there was something passionately cheerful in the whole atmosphere of the Church: he seemed that moment to understand what had so often puzzled him, and found nothing unnatural in rejoicing that a God had been born into the world to be tormented and harried out of it by men. . . . After all, what could it matter to a God the worst that men could do

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to Him? He remembered that one part of God had explained to the other, and, he supposed, less intelligent parts (anyhow, the more old-fashioned parts) that men knew not what they did. . . . It occurred to him that men knew very little more about it now, nineteen hundred years afterwards. . . . Look at the way Father Tudor had tormented him, but he wasn't going back on that: he had forgiven Father Tudor.

Coming out of Church, Mr Macarthy said that before their early dinner he had a call to pay, and after looking in at Mountjoy Square, where he found a parcel, which Adam judged to contain toys, he led him down Fitzgibbon Street to a shabby little house in the Circular Road, which, bidding Adam to wait outside a moment, he entered, the door being opened for him by a little girl who, if only because it was Christmas time, looked less shabby than the house. Behind the closed door Adam could hear the rapturous squeaking of other children, which told him that Mr Macarthy's parcel was being opened. Enjoying a sort of semi-proprietorial interest in the ecstasies of the unseen children, Adam stepped out in the direction of Drumcondra to keep himself warm while waiting. His exultant feeling was dismally checked as, at the end of twenty feet, he swung round to return, and his eye caught sight, curling into the perspective that closed that segment of the road, of the slow approach of a funeral: funerals had always seemed to him more terrible than death. To die was a natural thing, but to have a funeral seemed something purely artificial—an invention to disgust you with Nature. Usually he turned his back on funerals until the hearse was actually passing, when, of course, he stood to attention to salute the corpse; but this particular funeral, catching him when he was unprepared for it, was not to be ignored. Slowly, very slowly, it advanced down that long perspective towards him,

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the white plumes on the horses' heads told him that it was a burial of youth. His mind reverted at once to his vision, real or fanciful, of Caroline Brady twenty hours before. . . . Anyhow, whatever it was, it was not her funeral. . . . He wished that Mr Macarthy would hurry up, so that they might get safely away up Fitzgibbon Street before the sordid, gloomy, fascinating thing got any nearer. He stood at the bottom of the steps and strained his ears for a signal that his guardian was coming, but he heard no more than vague reverberations of the mirth of romping children. . . . The funeral came on and on; it was not a long funeral, not as long even as Mr Macfadden's—the hearse, two mourning coaches, a cab and a car. Adam doffed his hat as the hearse passed. A small coffin, not a child's, but small; he imagined a hobbledehoy inside it. In the mourning coach—he saw only the leading one—sat a woman whose appearance he did not like, and a man he cared for even less: the woman oddly reminded him of the lady who lived on the first floor at Pleasant Street, and desired Mr Moore to play 'Love's Dream,' but she was older and wearier looking. The man was dressed like a gentleman, in a tall hat, and a hand in a black kid glove rested on the frame of the window. He looked at Adam as if he would say to him: 'This funeral belongs to me; it is not the first I have had the honour of owning, and it will not be the last.' Adam, disconcerted by the perverse pride of this gentleman's glance, which seemed to his own joy of life immoral, looked away from him to the opposite seat, and saw there, sitting all alone, with her back to the coachman, Caroline Brady. . . . Their eyes met; he snatched off his hat, which had barely returned to his head from its salute to the corpse, and she, whether or not recognising him, bowed and smiled with obvious gratification. . . . Then the door behind him banged, and he and Mr Macarthy, dodging behind the tail of the funeral, marched up Fitzgibbon Street.

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To Mr Macarthy Adam said nothing of what he had seen: he had never mentioned Caroline's name to his guardian, and an odd feeling came over him as they climbed the hill to the square that perhaps he might never do so now. Of Josephine O'Meagher he felt he might talk to him—indeed, had done so—and of Barbara Burns he had no difficulty in talking, but Caroline Brady was a secret to be kept to himself; true, Herr Behre knew of her, but he thought that by this time he had forgotten her name. Mr Macarthy's voice fell on his ear: 'You weren't cold waiting there, I hope?'

'N-no,' said Adam with hesitation, and added, as if it were in answer to the question: 'Funerals are queer old things.'

'They are,' said Mr Macarthy, almost savagely. 'Damned things. I detest them.'

Now that they were up in the square again, Adam was cheerier and could talk of funerals with detachment. 'Why do people have them?' he asked.

'Because they cling to abominations of all kinds,' Mr Macarthy answered; and their arrival at his house closed the conversation.

The only one at dinner was Herr Behre, and after dinner, which was jolly enough, Mr Macarthy turned to him and said: 'Adam shares my dislike for funerals.'

'Ach,' said Herr Behre, 'why should you dislike a poor funeral? We have all got to die, and it is insani-tary not to be buried.'

'It's morally insanitary,' Mr Macarthy returned, 'to have a funeral.'

'You must have something,' Herr Behre argued.

'Certainly,' said Mr Macarthy; 'you can have the dustman.'

Adam pricked his ears. 'That reminds me of something Father Innocent said,' he declared. 'He thought an empty hearse was no more than a dustcart, or even a full hearse.'

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'If Father Innocent had been Pope,' Mr Macarthy said, 'I should have been a good Catholic.'

'Bah!' said Herr Behre, 'you are always joking.'

'If Father Innocent had been Pope,' Mr Macarthy insisted, 'all people who joke would have been good Catholics.'

Herr Behre put on a pair of pince-nez and looked at him gravely. 'Is it you who have warned Adam Macfadden against idle words?' he demanded.

'I have,' Mr Macarthy avowed. 'Idle words lead, more than anything else does, to damnation; they are the intellectual source of all misery.'

'What, exactly, do you mean by idle words?' Herr Behre asked.

Mr Macarthy looked at him with real or affected astonishment. 'I mean,' said he, 'the language, public and private, of those people commonly described by themselves as the governing classes.'

'But,' Herr Behre protested, 'what need is there to warn Adam against the language of the governing classes?'

'Think,' said Mr Macarthy. 'Why, even I, but for the merciful interposition of Providence, might now be governing a part of India.'

'So far as government is to be tolerated at all,' said Herr Behre, 'you would have done it better than another.'

'Just so,' smiled Mr Macarthy; 'my superb brain would have been used to assist in the perpetuation of an iniquity.'

'I don't understand,' Adam broke in; 'is it wrong to govern India?'

'It is wrong to govern anything,' Mr Macarthy answered firmly, 'against the consent of that thing.'

'Hear, hear,' said Herr Behre. 'Now I take your meaning—that the laws of such governments are idle words.'

'Their laws,' Mr Macarthy said with unusual gravity,
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'and their prayers, and what they call their words of honour, are all equally idle. . . . Idler than the poorest of the poems of David Byron-Quinn; for even his false sentiments were an effort to get away from the sentiments of greater falsity which inspired his brothers in arms.'

Adam, he knew not why, was glad to hear his guardian speak well of the slain baronet. Seeing there was a chance for him to say something which appeared appropriate to the general tenor of the discussion, he spoke up, addressing himself to Mr Macarthy: 'Do you think, sir,' said he, 'that the baronet was glad to think that he wasn't going to have a funeral?'

Mr Macarthy and Herr Behre broke into laughter, and Mr Macarthy had to pull himself together to say: 'Lucky dog! He had no time to think about it.'

'Lucky dog?' Adam echoed; 'do you really mean he was a lucky dog?'

'He was generally thought so,' said Mr Macarthy grimly, 'whatever he may have thought about it himself.'

'But,' Adam protested, 'that last poem of his was desperately sad.'

Mr Macarthy answered: 'David Byron-Quinn was a man of moods. He may have been depressed the night before his death, but his death itself you may be sure that he enjoyed, perhaps almost as much as those who killed him.'

Adam shuddered. 'He must have been a queer man,' said he.

'He was,' Mr Macarthy agreed, 'as queer as you, as queer as I.' His voice fell, and Adam was thinking of this queerness, that seemed all the queerer for the gloom falling in the room, as the Christmas sun went down behind Findlater's Church. There was a long silence ere anyone spoke again; then Mr Macarthy, standing with his back to the fire, was thrown into

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ruddy silhouette by a sudden blaze of flame from the coals behind him, and he recited dreamily :

'And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
High-piping Póhlevi, with "Wine ! Wine ! Wine !
Red Wine !"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers t' incarnadine.'

In his cursory glance through the poems of Sir David Byron-Quinn, Adam had not noticed any lines resembling these. 'Did the baronet write that too?' he asked.

Mr Macarthy smilingly shook his head. 'No, the baronet wrote nothing so good as that,' he said, 'but he had the sense to see the goodness of it before lesser men realised that the man who wrote it was a great poet.'

'Who was he?' asked Adam eagerly. 'I never heard of him.'

'He was Edward Fitzgerald,' Mr Macarthy said, 'or, if you like, he was Omar Khayyam.' Without leaving his place, he reached a little book from the shelves above his head, and tossed it over to his youthful guest. 'Take them home with you,' he said, 'but not to Clongowes, or they will share the fate of the *Boy's Own Paper*.'

And that night, by the light of the bull's eye lantern (for although there was no reason now why he should not have kept the gas burning, Adam was temperamentally conservative), he departed from Greece into Persia.

Chapter Twenty-One

ADAM IS ADVISED TO READ THE BIBLE

ENTHUSIASM roused Adam early on St Stephen's Day, and, with his new literary treasure in his hand, he addressed himself from his bed to the spire of St George's Church in these terms :

'Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and
strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light.'

The second quatrain appealed to him less; the allusions in that and those immediately following were too recondite for him, and so was the sixth, commencing with 'And David's Lips are lock't,' which had seemed so full of meaning when spoken by Mr Macarthy yesterday; but the seventh seemed clear enough :

'Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
Your Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.'

And only too clear was the eighth :

'Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.'

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Too clear was the eighth. The book still in his hand, Adam's eyes wandered off the page to see again the funeral that had wended its way along the North Circular Road into his vision yesterday. It seemed to him uncanny that he, who had so often thought of Caroline Brady as being dead, should see her at last, for the first time that he was sure of her, going to the funeral of someone else. . . . And that someone probably a near relative—he recalled the smallness of the coffin—probably a brother or a sister. . . . And some day surely his own coffin would be carrying him to Glasnevin. He flung down the book. Nonsense! Whatever was going to happen to him, he simply would not submit to being carried in a coffin to Glasnevin or any other cemetery. Better, like that baronet, to meet his death amidst the pride of life and be scattered to the four winds. . . . And yet, if Mr Macarthy himself had died of that cold he had, how could he prevent himself being boxed away and carted off to some cemetery or other?

Later in the day he put the question to his guardian, frankly, in schoolboy style.

'If Dr Ahern hadn't cured you of that cold, and you'd died,' he put it to him, 'what would you have done to prevent yourself being buried?' When the words were spoken, he thought them a little harshly expressed, and would have apologised for them.

But Mr Macarthy accepted them in the spirit in which they were offered. 'If I'd died,' said he, 'I should have done nothing, but my executor would have seen, I trust, that my body was burnt.'

'Oh,' said Adam, 'burnt. . . . In a fire?'

'Not exactly in a fire,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but in an arrangement heated by fire called a crematorium.'

'Oh,' Adam repeated, 'a crematorium; I know. That's what you call being cremated.' Mr Macarthy bowed his head in acknowledgment of the truth of

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this observation, and Adam, his mind travelling fast, asked: 'Where can I be cremated?'

'There is no place handy,' Mr Macarthy confessed. 'I take it you are in no hurry?'

'No, no, not at all,' Adam assured him. 'I'd as soon as not live for ever.'

Mr Macarthy shook his head. 'No, Adam, you would not; a time would come when you would pray and long for death.'

Adam was sure that Mr Macarthy was wrong on this point, but he was too polite to say so. 'The Holy Fathers lived to be very old,' he said.

'Much too old,' said Mr Macarthy.

'Do you believe they did really?' Adam asked inconsequently.

'No,' said Mr Macarthy.

'Why,' said Adam, 'is everyone younger in the New Testament than in the Old?'

Mr Macarthy answered question with question. 'Why is everything different in the New Testament from the Old?'

Adam answered readily: 'Because the Old Testament was written by Jews and the New Testament by Christians.'

'And what is the difference,' Mr Macarthy put it to him, 'between a Christian and a Jew?'

Adam was on the point of replying to this with equal readiness when he realised that he did not know the answer; so he said: 'There is a difference between them, isn't there?'

'There would seem to be,' said Mr Macarthy, 'if there is a difference between the Old Testament and the New.'

Adam reflected on this for a long time, until his mind wandered back to his early question, 'Where could I get cremated?' Then, recalling that he had had an answer to this which was not very satisfactory,

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he asked: 'Where were you thinking of getting cremated?'

'It would have been a toss-up,' Mr Macarthy said, 'between Woking and Golders Green.'

'That would be in England,' said Adam, jealously.

Mr Macarthy bowed apologetically. 'The nearest place where I can have it done,' said he.

'Can't you be cremated in Ireland?' Adam asked.

'Not by any recognised scientific process,' Mr Macarthy said.

Adam reflected a little while, and then broke forth again. 'You'll excuse me saying it, sir, won't you?' he asked, 'but it sometimes seems to me, from the way you say things, that you don't think much of Ireland?'

Their conversation was taking place in the sitting-room at Mountjoy Square, and Mr Macarthy, his back turned to Adam, appeared to be looking for a book. He wheeled round and came over to him, as one perplexed by a fresh proposition. 'Don't I,' said he, rather distractedly for him, 'Don't I seem to think much of Ireland? That's odd.' He added, as one who offers an apology: 'It seems to me that, directly or indirectly, I am thinking of Ireland all the time.'

Adam said: 'I meant to say that you didn't think Ireland was up to much.'

'It's not up to much in the matter of funeral arrangements,' Mr Macarthy said, and immediately corrected himself: 'At least, it's first rate on the old-fashioned side. . . . If I wanted to get buried I can't imagine anything pleasanter in the way of a burial-place than, say, a corner of Kilcrea Abbey.'

'Where's that?' Adam promptly asked.

'Between Cork and Macroom, in my own Muskerry,' Mr Macarthy said, with something that seemed to Adam almost to approach sentiment. 'It's just the ruin of a Franciscan Abbey, built, I suppose, about

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a generation before Poyning's Act. Did you ever hear of Poyning's Act?'

'1492,' said Adam, with a chirp of self-approbation. He did not add that that was all he knew, or very nearly. Things that happened before his own time were of scanty interest. 'Why,' said he, 'would you like to be buried in that Abbey?'

'I wouldn't like to be buried there,' Mr Macarthy said, 'but if I had to be buried I'd prefer that to a necropolis.'

'What's a necropolis?' Adam asked.

'Haven't you enough Greek to realise that it means a city of the dead, or, in other words, a sort of municipality of corpses crowded together in rotten streets?' His face wore an expression of disgust.

Adam shuddered. 'I suppose Glasnevin is a necropolis?'

'More or less,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but not a bad example of one.'

'There are worse necropolises?' Adam put this question with difficulty.

'Decidedly worse,' Mr Macarthy assured him. 'At Glasgow, for example.' He broke off. 'Everything in Scotland is either worse or better than anywhere else.'

Adam questioned gloomily: 'I suppose if you're dead it doesn't hurt to be burnt?' He saw his guardian smiling in spite of himself. 'I don't, of course, mean in hell,' he explained: 'that would hurt, of course, if you were dead or alive.'

Mr Macarthy said gravely: 'It is agreed that to be burnt alive hurts. I have no information as to what it feels like when you're dead.'

'D'you mean the fire of hell, now,' Adam asked, 'or what?'

'Any old fire,' said Mr Macarthy, which Adam recognised as a form of speech terminating an interrogation.

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Yet he could not resist one question more. 'Please,' he said, with a note of appeal in his voice, 'd'you think that baronet is in hell?'

Mr Macarthy looked grave. 'If you mean by that do I think that David Byron-Quinn is being tossed from a red-hot gridiron into an ice-chest and back again, or being put to some other form of imbecile torment, I do not. Hell, in that sense of the word, is too obviously the conception of vulgar and paltry minds to appeal to anything but my sense of the ridiculous, but whether the mind of David Byron-Quinn may still be suffering in some way to which any torment his worst enemies could devise for his body would appear to him a mere jest, is a question to which I do not know the answer. Philosophically I see no probability of it, but my imagination admits the possibility of such a thing.'

Adam thought for a long while, and then asked in a rather hushed voice: 'What could he have done that would call for such a terrible punishment as that?'

Mr Macarthy was slow in replying, and he glanced again at his copy of the baronet's verses before he answered: 'He seems to me to accuse himself in his last poem of one of the greatest of all crimes.'

Adam's voice trembled: 'I—I didn't understand that,' he murmured. 'What was the crime?'

There was a menacing thunder in his guardian's answer that echoed through Adam's mind all the days of his life as no inhibition spoken from the pulpit or in the confessional echoed there: 'He begot a child in lust.'

Adam sat still with stunned and horrified ears. The word 'lust' spoken as a real word was strange to him: he had read it time and again in his books, but he did not remember to have heard it. In the confessional it had been called 'impurity'. . . . He understood his guardian to convey that the great sin committed by Sir David Byron-Quinn was that by some outrageous act of impurity he had begotten a child. . . . A child

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begotten in impurity was—he looked up at his guardian: ‘You mean,’ said he, ‘that the baronet was the father of a bastard?’

The rage had gone out of Mr Macarthy’s eyes, but his voice was harsh and vindictive: ‘I mean worse than that,’ said he. ‘Perhaps on balance the world owes a debt of gratitude to those who have brought bastards into it.’

‘But isn’t it very wrong?’ said Adam. ‘Isn’t it a sin?’

‘The historical answer to that,’ Mr Macarthy said thoughtfully, ‘would appear to be that its being right or wrong depends upon place and time. . . . You know that text from St Matthew that hangs in my bedroom?’ As Adam looked at him blankly he said: ‘I see you don’t.’

‘D’you mean in Greek?’ Adam said, ‘Over the mantelpiece? I remember puzzling over it, but I’d no idea what it meant.’ He added frankly: ‘I didn’t even know it was the Bible.’

Mr Macarthy paused as though he were making up his mind whether to enlighten Adam or not. At last he said simply: ‘It is from the first chapter of St Matthew, giving that apostle’s version of the genealogy of Christ which is accepted as canonical by all Christianity. It is the sixth verse, and in English runs thus: “And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias.”’ He looked straight at Adam, ‘You know the story of David and the wife of Urias?’

Adam confessed that he did not, and as his guardian briefly and reticently told it to him his golden vision of a young David valiantly confronting Goliath, a transcendent Jack the Giant Killer, was rendered down into a base picture of a crime for the *Police News*. He beat Mr Macarthy’s table with his young fists in his rage at the lecherous king’s perfidy and cried with tears of vengeance for the murdered soldier in his

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eyes: 'I hope David is burning in hell for doing the like of that!'

Mr Macarthy smiled grimly, and in a soft but clear voice said: 'If David hadn't done the like of that, does it occur to you that St Matthew would have had nothing to write about?'

Adam looked up at him in blank amazement. 'Go on!' said he.

To Adam's callow imagination Mr Macarthy appeared to be posing the suggestion that if David had not caught Bath-sheba in a state of undress there would have been no such thing as Christianity. And Mr Macarthy, glancing in his eyes, saw that idea latent in them. He went on to say: 'I think it a pity that you do not read the Bible for yourself. I would advise you to read it and to ask Father Steele, or whoever your confessor may be, to tell you what he understands from such passages as may puzzle you.' He seemed to think a moment, and then went on again: 'Tell Father Steele what I said to you; it may be that he will forbid you to read the Bible, but I don't think that he will try consciously to tell you any lies about it.'

'Of course he wouldn't tell me lies!' said Adam indignantly.

Mr Macarthy smiled at him and answered mildly: 'I'm glad to hear you say that, that is my own feeling about him.' He added: 'But it would not surprise me if he forbade you to read it.'

'Has he any right to forbid me?' Adam asked.

'That is a question for your conscience,' Mr Macarthy declared.

'But,' said Adam frankly, 'isn't it he who tells me what ought to be against my conscience?'

'Is it?' Mr Macarthy simply answered, 'I didn't know that.'

Adam was silent a moment. 'After all I'm not sure myself,' he said at last.

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'Sooner or later,' Mr Macarthy advised him, 'you will come to the conclusion that the best keeper of your conscience is yourself.' He looked at Adam wistfully: 'Mind you, I am far from saying that you are necessarily old enough to take complete charge of it already. . . . I honestly think that for the present you would do well to allow Father Steele to help you.'

'At Clongowes,' Adam volunteered, 'I went to confession to Father Bernard James.' As his guardian refrained from any comment he put the question to him directly: 'Do you think would he be all right?'

'Father Bernard James,' Mr Macarthy shrugged his shoulders, 'who am I to be judge? I should think he was a decent man, and so far as I know him I like him well enough. If you are content with him I would not come between you, but I think I can do no harm in saying that I believe him to be intellectually and therefore morally,' he repeated: 'yes, therefore morally, inferior to Father Steele. But remember, I do not ask you to weigh my opinion against that of either of them. . . . More than that, I wish to impress upon you that if I have spoken severely of David Byron-Quinn you must not understand from that that harsher judgments might not in my own opinion be passed upon myself.'

Chapter Twenty-Two

FATHER STEELE'S VICTORY

WHEN the shops re-opened after Christmas, Adam betook himself to Grafton Street, and from the same authoritative bookseller who had sold him his copy of Keats he bought a copy of the Bible. Remembering his misleading advice in the world of poetry, he had some misgiving as to whether the Bible with which he provided him could be the genuine article. He had three kinds, he mentioned in reply to Adam's inquiry: a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Revised. Adam, who was nothing if not thorough, would have liked to purchase all three, but smooth-faced commodity bade him be content with one at a time; so he plumped for the Catholic, and carried it home, notwithstanding its sober and unattractive appearance, with a pride which forbade him to accept of a paper wrapping for it.

But, arrived home, he found it dull work trying to read it: the Old Testament being squashed into seven hundred and fifty odd pages of minute print, and the New Testament into a couple of hundred. He turned first to the chapter from St Matthew which had provided Mr Macarthy with the text for his bedroom, and therein he read:

'The Genealogy of Christ: He is conceived and born of a Virgin.

The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2. Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.

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3. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram.

4. And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon.

5. And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jesse.

6. And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias.

7. And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Aza. . . .

At this point Adam found himself yawning, and, incontinently thinking of the House that Jack Built, ran his eye down several verses until he came to :

16. 'And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17. So all the generation, from Abraham to David, are fourteen generations. And from David to the transmigration of Babylon, are fourteen generations, and from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ, are fourteen generations.

18. Now the generation of Christ was in this wise. When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost.

19. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.

20. But while he thought on these things, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying : Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21. And she shall bring forth a son : and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.

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22. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying :

23. Behold a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24. And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.

25. And he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son : and he called his name Jesus.'

Appended to this was an exegetical foot-note stating that 'Helvidius and other heretics most impiously infer that the Blessed Virgin Mary had other children besides Christ.' But that St Jerome had triumphantly argued to the contrary. Adam was not impressed by the cogency of St Jerome's argument : even this single chapter from St Matthew made an entirely different impression on his mind than the story of the birth of Christ which he had perhaps imagined for himself from the embryo planted in his youthful fancy by Father Innocent and not removed by the Catechism. He had an odd feeling that the Christ presented to him by Father Innocent was the real one, and that either St Matthew was misinformed upon the subject, or else that in the copy of the Bible which that pretentious book-seller had sold him, he was wrongly reported.

With an uneasy feeling, he turned back to the title-page, and found that the Old Testament was as first published by the English College at Douay, A.D. 1609, and the New Testament as first published by the English College at Rheims, A.D. 1582. That they should have been produced by English colleges anywhere strengthened his suspicion of them. . . . In the other scale was the assertion that the whole had been revised and diligently compared with the Latin

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Vulgate, and published by the approbation of a Bishop of Down and Connor more than sixty years before; also there was a letter of his Holiness Pius VI. to the most Reverend Anthony Martini, Archbishop of Florence, congratulating him on his translation of the Bible into Italian, and remarking that 'At a time that a vast number of bad books, which grossly attacked the Catholic religion, are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well, that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these are the most abundant sources, which ought to be left open to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in those corrupt times,' and so on. So it seemed to Adam that the book must be genuine enough; he told himself that he must try to like it, and turned the pages in hope of finding something that would restore to him the Holy Family, with which he had believed himself to be more familiar than his own. Chancing on the information that St Luke was 'By profession a physician; and some ancient writers say, that he was very skilful in painting,' he started to read him, and was better held by his narrative than by Matthew's. Until he came to his genealogical table: 'And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years; being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was of Heli, who was of Mathat, who was of Levi, who was of Melchi, who was of Janne, who was of Joseph. . . .'

With an unaccountable feeling of mystification, Adam read on names that were but obscurely familiar until he came to the thirty-first verse: 'Who was of Melea, who was of Menna, who was of Mathatha, who was of Nathan, who was of David.

32. Who was of Jesse, who was of Obed, who was of Booz, who was of Salmon. . . .'

'Salmon, Salmon,' Adam repeated under his breath,

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'where does Solomon come in?' and his mind ran feverishly up and down the page to find the name of David's son by her who had been the wife of Urias. Then the whole world seemed to go gray, and he longed with an intensity as great as he had ever felt for Father Innocent to guide him. His instinct told him that all the learning of the Jesuits would not help him: he almost dreaded the wisdom of the wise; he felt that the Christianity of Matthew and Luke was spurious compared with the Christianity of Innocent.

He wished he had not wasted money on this book, merely to confuse and sadden his mind; he closed it and put it away among his school prizes and such other books as he was not likely to read again, or had never ventured to read at all. He was standing with his hands in his pockets, frowning at his library, when the bells of St George's Church ringing the three quarters called him to the window to look at that edifice: he had a double curiosity, to see what the time was and to see the church itself; the time was a quarter to three—in another hour the sun would have set upon one more day of his life. . . . The thoughts that had come to him on his thirteenth birthday came back, some of them, in a graver, more insistent form: he was growing old: he was almost done with childhood: he was on the verge of manhood: from manhood to second childhood was but a step: he visualised himself as an old man of fifty, possibly even more, but fifty was old age, and he had travelled more than a quarter of the way to fifty. . . . Soon he would have travelled half, soon three quarters, soon he would be at his journey's end, a journey along roads the map of which he had lost. . . . Had he ever possessed it? A year ago he had thought it, particularly in class at Belvedere, a dreary and rather futile journey, but had no doubt whatever of his way (if only Father Tudor would suffer him to keep on his way). Since

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then the journey itself had become a joy, until he had been wakened to-day to the knowledge that he had lost all sense of direction and almost all faith in the ability of anyone to give it back to him. The Bible was supposed by him to be the road-book of the Catholic's progress through this vale of tears. . . . His instinct had always repudiated the notion of its being a vale of tears, but the phrase came back to him now, throwing a baleful look over his shoulder at the shelf where his new acquisition lowered gloomily back upon him: he deemed that meanly printed, incomprehensible, self-stultifying epitome of gloom to be a vade-mecum to the Slough of Despond, and, turning his gaze upon St George's Church, he marvelled that that pleasantly graceful tabernacle should have been built by men who preferred the ugly dreariness and unintelligibility of the Bible to the agreeable (on the whole, agreeable) romance the Catholic Fathers had grafted on it. . . . Then the bells of St George's Church rang three, and Adam, remembering in what circumstances he had heard them ring three on his last day at Belvedere, wondered whether, after all, the Protestant reading of Christianity could produce anything more un-Christian than Father Tudor.

Suddenly he turned from the window, seized his cap, and, forgetful of his overcoat, ran downstairs, banged the door behind him, flung round the corner into Temple Street, and round again into Gardiner's Place, and, still running, into Gardiner Street, up the steps into the church. There he knelt down and prayed. . . . Perhaps he rather thought and imagined than prayed, but, anyhow, he communed with that something of which every man is conscious as being within himself and yet not of himself, credibly his interpreter to the Absolute, which Adam visualised as a quintessential Father Innocent. At such a moment as this the beatified see visions, but Adam was not of them. Presently he rose and, outwardly calm, passed

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up into the sanctuary, and tried the handle of one of the doors, built flush with the masonry, and so not noticeable to all, which give upon the presbytery gallery. He closed it behind him, and turned to see a priestly form pass down the gallery in the direction of the hall door. The figure carried a tall hat and an umbrella, and moved with the gait of a young body prematurely aged: Adam recognised Father Steele, and sprang forward to overtake him ere he could reach the hall door.

The clatter of heavily booted young feet in that quiet place startled the priest so that he wheeled round to see by whom he was pursued. He did not at once recognise the figure of the boy rushing headlong towards him.

'Father Ignatius!' cried Adam frantically, 'Father Ignatius Steele, sir: may I just ask you a question?'

'Certainly,' said Father Ignatius, glancing at his watch, 'but you must be quick; what is it?'

Adam was quick, quicker than Father Steele anticipated. 'Is it possible to prove,' he cried, 'that Jesus Christ ever really existed?'

'Tut, tut,' said Father Steele, much taken aback and very red, 'Of course it is, of course.' His watch slipped back into his pocket and Time was forgotten. 'Come in here,' he said, and opened the door of the room in which Adam made his first acquaintance with the power and the glory of the Jesuits. It looked precisely the same as when Adam saw it first, and the eyes of the holy men who are with God focused on him as sharply as ever. Father Ignatius laid his hat on the table, also he laid there his umbrella. Then he said: 'Sit down,' but he himself did not sit down. It seemed to Adam that before he spoke again he said a prayer, then his expression, which had passed from the startled and indignant to the merely perplexed, grew gentle and kindly and sweetly reasonable again. At last he spoke: 'Perhaps I answered you too

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quickly just now,' he said, 'when I told you that of course the reality of the existence of Christ can be proved. I believe that it can be proved, but, to be perfectly frank, I cannot prove it even to myself.' He looked at Adam: 'Do you hear that?'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam, wondering what would follow this appalling admission.

'Now, hear this,' said Father Steele: 'with me it is purely a matter of faith that Christ really existed, true man and true God, but that faith in me is so strong that I should account it the greatest happiness that could be afforded me that I might perish in its defence.' He smiled. 'Don't think I mean as a crusader or anything romantic, Adam; I only mean that I should think myself most happy to suffer as St Stephen did, whose feast, you know, was yesterday. You know how he died?'

'Yes, sir,' said Adam glibly: 'he was stoned to death,' and his mind ran instantly to a question: 'Is it a fact that St Paul helped to stone him?'

Father Steele waved an amiable hand: 'Don't ask me for facts, Adam,' he protested; 'I am concerned only with questions of faith; if you have nothing further to put to me concerning questions of faith, I must go.' He took up his hat and umbrella.

Adam rose. 'I think that's all, sir,' he submitted. Then burst out: 'I'm glad you feel like that about Jesus; that's just how I feel myself.'

Father Steele patted him affectionately on the shoulder. 'How charming, my dear boy, how delightful. That is the real feeling to have, I am convinced.' And so they parted, well pleased with one another.

Father Steele walked with Adam as far as the corner of Temple Street, but tactfully spoke only of secular things. His mind was full of the thought of Labour troubles, and he said the coming year was full of the presage of distress. 'Your sympathy, like mine,'

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said he, 'will be with the poor people, but I am afraid that, morally, they are not always in the right.'

Well as Adam liked him, he did not hesitate to answer stoutly: 'It's hard to be always in the right if you're poor.'

Father Steele looked at him with interest. 'Only too true,' said he. 'In the world we know, this world, ruled, if I may say so without offence, by Protestants, the poor have all the punishments of sin, but few, if any, of the rewards of virtue; but I fear I am right in saying that many of the miseries of the poor are brought about by the poor themselves. I don't mean through drink or laziness or even unthrift, for certainly the poor are not so luxurious nor so lazy nor so unthrifty as the rich, but I mean that in their efforts to better their condition they fall into excesses which ultimately recoil upon themselves. For instance, these strikes: in nine cases out of ten the evil of the strike falls not on the employer but on the employed.'

'Then why do they strike?' Adam asked point blank.

'Why indeed?' sighed Father Steele; 'sometimes, no doubt, reasonably and legitimately; more often, perhaps, because the memory of a legitimate victory gives the hope of another less legitimate; but I believe I am right in saying that, take the victories with the defeats, strikes mean a dead loss to everyone.'

'Then you think, sir,' said Adam, 'there ought to be no strikes?'

'Certainly,' said Father Steele, 'there ought to be no strikes.' But, as they stopped at the corner of Temple Street to say good-bye, he added: 'That is not to say that I am blaming the men, even for such strikes as seem to be provoked entirely by them. Whether, humanly speaking, they be sinning or sinned against, my sympathy, and, I hope, your sympathy, will be always with the poor.'

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'But supposing,' Adam returned, 'the poor should be in the wrong? Why should one sympathise with them then?'

'Because,' said Father Steele, 'they have the most need of it.'

Something in his tone held Adam, cap in hand, gazing wistfully after him as he passed on down Denmark Street. Then a sneeze recalled the boy to the discovery that he was standing in the cold without an overcoat, and he ran home to his cosy fire.

Chapter Twenty-Three

OF FLIGHT AND A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

THE third week of the New Year found Adam back at Clongowes. He was not the same Adam who had come there as a new boy four months before: nor was he even the Adam who had sat beside Father Bernard James on the car bowling down to Sallins Station two days before Christmas. He had returned to Clongowes with an odd mingling of hope and fear: all that part of him that was reasonable told him that he was going to do well this term at school; the imagination attached to his reason showed him his name bulking proudly in the Intermediate reports, his portrait blazoned in *The Clongownian* as an exhibitor, and the Lord knows what besides. . . . Yet his instinct was full of dread; he had no idea of what he was afraid, but afraid he was. . . . This grew. During the day time, and more particularly when in class, he was happy enough; but with the falling of night came apprehension; each happy day ended with the anticipation of a disastrous to-morrow.

He struggled with this feeling, and one night, several weeks since his return to school, convinced himself that he had got the better of it; for the most careful examination of his position showed to him no opening through which he could be assailed: at Clongowes, so far as he was aware, he had no enemy: certainly none among the masters, and none avowedly among the boys. In Dublin he had in his day memories only friends, and of their friendship he felt surer than ever. That night he slept well, and in the morning cheerily

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arose. He had taken to washing himself carefully again, and the other boys had passed on down to the chapel before he left the dormitory. He descended alone: it was a cold, raw morning, and all was starkly gray in the gas-light. . . . He had a feeling, suddenly, that fear was waiting for him somewhere in the depth below: foolish, unaccountable fear. At the bottom of the staircase he heard it pacing towards him, as though coming up the Lower Line gallery. He stopped to listen; yes, he surely heard footsteps . . . Obscurely familiar footsteps; they came on and on, and then, as he expected them to mount and meet him, they paused by the Higher Line Library and again retreated.

Pulling himself together, he swung round past the library door and hurried down to the gallery; in front of him he saw that he had allowed himself to be terrified by one of the priests, patrolling the gallery between him and the chapel, presumably reading his office. Knowing himself to be late for prayers, Adam hurried on behind him, on tiptoe, not to attract his attention. But as he hastened the priest slackened his pace, perhaps purposely stepped short, and, just as Adam thought to slip in at the chapel door behind him, swung round and stopped him with an outstretched arm, while a terrible voice boomed: 'What's this? What's this? Who can this be? Ah, ha! Ah, ha! So we meet again.'

A sweat broke out on Adam's brow. He did not answer; for he thought himself dreaming. . . . He must be still in bed dreaming what he often dreamt, that Father Tudor had caught him in his clutches once again. He stared at the white cuff, the red and hairy hand; he knew them so well; he saw them so often in his dreams. . . .

Again the voice boomed in his ear: 'What's this? What's this? . . . Why don't you answer me?'

In all innocence he gave the answer most fortunate for himself: 'I feel sick.'

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Father Tudor's grasp not so much released as rejected him, and his despotic voice boomed: 'Oh . . . I will see you later.'

Without answer, Adam passed on into the chapel. He was not so sick but to have it clearly in his mind that not of his own free will would he see Father Tudor again. If Father Tudor was come to Clongowes, he must go. Now he understood the premonition of evil which had haunted him day and night. . . . He did not pray that morning in chapel: he planned.

Why Father Tudor was there he did not ask himself; the thought that it might be a flying visit never entered his head. It was enough for Adam that he was there and that he had heard once again his voice addressing him as one in authority, one of that cohort of the despicably hateful who had, or pretended to have, the Castle behind them. . . . He felt that even if Mr Macarthy and all his friends had sped to his rescue and driven this enemy headlong in flight, still there could be no happiness more for him, no possible life at all, within the walls that had to-day been polluted by his presence. . . . Mr Macarthy had won from him the undertaking to forgive this man, and he had forgiven him: he wished him no evil, his feeling for him was not one of hate, but the dread and loathing aroused by a foul and terrible beast, the beast that, in the Catholic religion, symbolises all evil, that is imaged as trodden upon by the conquering feet of her who carried God in her womb: the snake. The brain that burnt behind Adam's sweating temples planned no hurt to Father Tudor, but only the means to escape, he cared not whither, provided it should be where he would never fear that bestial menace again.

Leaving the chapel with the other boys, he fell out of his place in the file ascending to the study, as one who has forgotten something, and returned to it unquestioned. There he knelt down before the statue

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of the Virgin and said the prayer of St Bernard; then, as it seemed to himself, quite calmly, he quitted the chapel and passed into the now empty gallery, put on his cap and a muffler, and tried the playground door in the Third Line gallery; but failed to open it. But his mind was quite clear: he was not to be baffled. Taking off his cap and muffler, he walked back quietly in the direction of the class-rooms and dormitories, and, still meeting no one, tried the door towards the infirmary. That, too, was locked, but a class-room door close by was open, and in that class-room one window was unfastened. . . . In a moment he was out in the grounds, trotting softly through the misty dawn towards the bicycle house, puzzling his brains how he should find means to burgle it. But Fortune favoured him; for the lock, when examined, proved to be un-shot. In the gloom it was hard to get out his bicycle, but, silently and with patience, he disentangled it, silently and with patience he steered it through and lifted it over all obstacles between him and the avenue; and then at last, not waiting to blow up the tyres, he clambered into his saddle and swung off swiftly down the byway to the road. Within twenty minutes from the moment of leaving the chapel, the trees had swallowed him from the sight of any watcher at Clongowes. He was not very sure of his way, but that it was north and east; and so, with a warm wind sweeping him on, he flew to meet the sun. . . . To plunge, as it seemed to him, into the arms of Liberty.

Without a map, and unwilling to ask his way, he tacked up and down upon a wavering course between the baronies of North Salt and South, conscious of nothing so much as the joy of being free, of leaving behind him the only tyranny before which he had quailed. It had been a hard, cold night, and there was frost on the meadows and hedgerows, even ice here and there on those quiet roads he was the first

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that day to traverse; but the south-west wind that followed him was already moistening the earth; and the sun, within a week of entering Aries, by eight o'clock was high enough above the world to warm it. Somewhere a lark was singing, and Adam felt himself in harmony with the birds and the calves and the lambs and all the other young things that, unthinking of the night so close upon them, welcomed the morn. Once he sat down to rest beside a stream, charmed by the inviting murmur of its waters: a boy bringing horses to it, the first he had spoken to since Father Tudor's voice had thundered panic in his ear, told him it was the Liffey, and his mind's eye pursued it through the foliage on its winding way to Dublin, where it would join that tinier rivulet which had bewitched him at Killakee; together they would fall into the sea, the sea that was the common ground of all the peoples of the teeming earth. . . . He pined again to look upon the sea, to travel on it, maybe, in the Bristol boat. The thought of the Bristol boat conjured up the thought of Caroline Brady; he knew not clearly why, unless it was that he had been thinking of her when his father had caught him lingering by Butt Bridge watching the Bristol boat so many years ago. . . . A doubt arose in his mind whether the Bristol boat lay any longer in that berth by the Custom House, where, when he was a little boy, he used to sit on the steps to watch her; but, whether the Bristol boat still ran or not, he knew that Caroline Brady was really alive; for he had seen her twice, or at any rate once for certain sure. A longing to see her again became urgent as he watched the Liffey water swooping down to the sea.

He mounted his bicycle and rode on. So easily had he taken things, so lightly wandered off from any probable high-road, that it was already noon when he found himself outside the factory chimneys of Celbridge, and another hour was gone ere he crossed

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the Dublin border. At Lucan he stopped to feed, modestly enough, on tea and bread and butter. It was two o'clock when he mounted again, conscious of weariness in his head and limbs. He rode beside the tram line until Chapelisod, where he turned into the Phoenix Park. Here it was dark, misty, and mysterious amidst the great trees: it seemed lonely, too, turning off the high-road, with all its traffic, into the aristocratic solitudes that embosomed the residence of the Viceroy and that Chief Secretary, nominally his servant, but, as Adam was politician enough to know, actually his master. Pedalling up the rising gradient that he guessed should lead him out somewhere between the Wellington Obelisk and the Zoological Gardens, whence he knew well his way into the town, he fell a-thinking on the mystery of government and why it was that the nominal master of Ireland should be paid £20,000 a year while the real master had less than a quarter of that sum, when out of the quiet of the trees came the cry of a woman's voice, a cry for help.

It startled him by the remembrance it roused of the clamant scream of his mother when the late Mr Macfadden laid violent hands upon her for the last time in that hero's life. . . . Not so shrill, not so compelling, not so convincing a cry was it . . . yet was it credibly, undeniably, the cry of a female, and a young female, in distress. And Adam knew it to be directed to him; he looked around, he saw no one, nothing beyond a lonely perspective ahead of him, and an equally lonely curve behind, so far as he could see behind without dismounting from his bicycle. . . . Instinct bade him put all his strength into his feet to carry that bicycle faster towards civilisation. . . . Then the scream came again, quite unmistakably: 'Help! Help!'

Dismounting, he faced about to see a young woman emerge from the gloom of a copse, running swiftly

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towards him. . . . She had the air of being pursued, and he thought he saw a further movement in the foliage behind her. He could not say what caused the movement; his mind's eye presented to him at once the images of a drunken tinker and a mad bull. . . . He had often thought of what he would do if he encountered a drunken tinker or a mad bull, and was not without a certain preparedness for meeting either of these contingencies. . . . But the uncertainty as to whether he was now about to confront the inebriated craftsman or the insane head of cattle unnerved him, and he found it hard indeed not to spring on his bicycle again while there was yet time. . . . As the distressed damsel drew near him she slackened her pace almost to stopping, but, seeing him as though in doubt whether to flee, she cried out again for help and accelerated her movement.

Partly because she cried to him, and partly because the enemy seemed loth to break cover, Adam gathered courage to stand his ground. . . . Near enough for him to see her eyes, he felt that it would be cowardly to desert her. Though a little dragged from her run, he deemed her too fair a lady to be left by him to the mercies of tinker or bull, if such, indeed, was the nature of her persecutor. A few feet from him she panted: 'You'll excuse me, won't you? . . . I thought you wouldn't mind.'

Adam touched his cap, would have lifted it, but it seemed somehow to have stuck to his forehead: 'Not at all,' he assured her, 'not at all. I don't mind in the very least,' and waited to learn what he was expected to mind.

'I knew you wouldn't mind,' she said, and beamed on him with pretty and coaxing brown eyes that held no great fear in them. 'It's a fearful lonely road, this.'

'I suppose it is lonely,' said Adam carelessly. 'What frightened you? Was it cattle or deer?'

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She seemed to him to blush. 'Frightened you may well say I was, but don't let me keep you standing talking.' As Adam hesitated, she suggested: 'Let's just walk on together, if you please.' Mystified, Adam obeyed, and began to push the bicycle somewhat drearily towards the east side of the park. 'Unless,' she suggested, 'you prefer to sit down and rest.'

Adam stared at her. 'I thought you said you were frightened?' he protested.

'I should just think I was,' she assured him; 'you feel my heart beat,' and she obligingly assisted him to do so.

Adam thought two things. Firstly, that her heart beat very nicely, and secondly, that it was odd that she should be so very frightened and so indifferent in the face of danger. 'What happened to you?' he asked.

She looked at him, and then dropped her eyes. 'What happened? . . . It wasn't so much what happened as what was going to happen.' She looked at him again, and again dropped her eyes. 'You'd never guess what was going to happen.'

Adam was disconcerted at the suggestion that he was unable to guess such a simple thing 'It was a bull?' he hazarded.

Their eyes met, and he saw there were tears in hers, but she did not speak. He could not make up his mind whether it was a bull or not. 'If it was a bull,' said he, 'we'd better not be standing here.'

Without enlightening him as to what it was, she answered: 'No; do let's be getting on.' She looked at his bicycle. 'I suppose you're too young to take me on the carrier?'

Adam was not used to taking people on his carrier, but he did not like to say 'No'. 'We might try,' he admitted. 'But how would you hold on?'

'With my arms round your waist, dear,' she said winningly.

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Adam looked from her to his bicycle, scratched his head, and then pinched his back tyre. 'I'm afraid,' he said at last, 'the weight would be too much.'

Her tone in rejoinder was ironical: 'I knew you were too young. Would you like me to walk beside and push you?'

Adam glared at her resentfully. 'I am thirteen,' said Adam, 'I will be fourteen before long.'

Her face fell and then lit up again. 'Is that all? . . . Then perhaps we'd better be getting on the way home. Your Da'll be angry if you're late for tea.'

'I have no Da,' Adam rejoined, and nearly claimed that he had never had one, but broke off to say once again: 'What was it frightened you?'

'Didn't you tell me it was a bull?' said she.

Adam thought her a baffling lady. 'I thought it was a bull, but——'

'Wonders will never cease,' said she. 'I thought it was a soldier.'

'A soldier?' Adam cried. 'A soldier, was it? Where is he?' He stopped and looked round defiantly.

The young lady took him by the arm. 'Never mind where he is now,' she said, 'sure, maybe when he saw the bicycle he ran away.'

Adam looked at her questioningly. 'Why should he be afraid of the bicycle?'

'In fear you might go and call the polis,' she answered, and hurried on. 'It was well for me you came, or I don't know what would have happened.'

Adam blushed to hear himself ask: 'What do you think might have happened?'

She looked at him defiantly: 'Oh, indeed, and nothing at all,' she said. 'I'd rather die than let a scrubby little snot of an English soldier kiss me holy toe.'

Adam looked at her with great interest and some admiration. 'D'you think he would have tried to do that?' he asked, adding a thoughtful: 'But why?'

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She laughed a bitter but a taking laugh. 'You never know what a khaki cut-throat will be after if he meets a girl on a lonely road.'

'But,' said Adam, 'to kiss your toe? There could be no great harm in that.'

'Not if he left off at the heel of me stocking,' she rejoined, 'but sure it's no use telling me you're only thirteen.'

'Nearly fourteen,' Adam said, 'I told you nearly fourteen.'

She eyed him quizzingly: 'You're the queer lad for your age,' she said, 'I think we'll part beyond at the cross road, for you wouldn't be liking to see me home, would you?'

'If you think there's any danger——' Adam began.

She cut in with: 'I see no bulls about, do you?'

'But there are soldiers,' Adam pointed out. There were two approaching swinging penny canes.

The lady looked at them. 'Oh, I wouldn't be afraid of that pair,' said she, 'and I see you don't want to bring me home.'

Adam reddened. He certainly did not want to bring her home, but he hated to say point blank that it was impossible, nor was he willing to betray the suspicion of her character forming in his mind. 'I have to go to Mountjoy Square,' he said, 'do you know where that is?'

She laughed. 'Who doesn't know where Mountjoy Square is, that knows anything about Dublin at all? Sure I live within a stone's throw of it myself.'

Of course, Adam could not refrain from the question: 'Where do you live?'

'I wondered how long ye'd be before you'd ask me that,' she returned. 'I live in Pleasant Street, and that's a fact, No. 10 and it's second next door but two from that grand house of Mrs O'Toole's.'

Adam's face and ears burned. 'Who is Mrs O'Toole?' he asked.

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The rescued damsel stared at him 'Well, it's easy to see you don't know much about Pleasant Street, or you wouldn't need to be told that Mrs O'Toole's real name is Mrs Macfadden.'

Adam did not stay to argue this point: suddenly he was in his saddle, pressing the pace to leave the lady behind. Turning a corner he glimpsed her over his shoulder talking to the two soldiers. Feverishly he rode on, plunging madly between the motor-cars sweeping up and down the main road by the Gough Statue. Soon he was whizzing through the park gates on to North Circular Road. He had no thought now but to get home and quickly, or rather to flee into that one certain harbour of refuge, his guardian Mr Macarthy's room. Pedalling ever faster, he hummed along the straight line to the Abattoir. In front of him he saw nothing but an electric tram outpacing him by very little up the road. He doubled his body in his effort to overtake it, then suddenly there was a shout, the roar of what he said to himself was that mad bull, a shock, horns and fiery eyes, a flying through space and nothingness.

Chapter Twenty-Four

THE MIRACLE OF THE TRAMS

IN after years Adam perceived two marked lacunæ in the history of his life which he carried in his memory, adding a paragraph day by day. The first was when the police spy, known to him by the sobriquet of Old Comet, frightened him to death's door outside the Gresham Hotel, and as chance would have it gave him his first glimpse of happiness. The second was when in full career from the renewed menace of Father Tudor, he dashed at the highest speed to which his young legs could urge his bicycle into a bullock proceeding to his own funeral outside the cattle market, whose last act ere passing over to the happy grounds where no drovers hunt, was to knock him senseless. Each break was the occasion of his waking and wondering to find himself in a hospital, but the second time his stay was short and his homecoming an event of joy. His fractures were simple and soon set, but the shock to spine and brain were serious, and it was full summer before Dr Ahern, once again in charge of him, pronounced him to be as sound as he was likely ever more to be.

This was the most luxurious spring of Adam's life. His fourteenth birthday, the happiest of all birthdays, for the simple reason that absolutely nothing happened on it: he simply lay most cosily in bed, read *The Three Musketeers*, and convinced himself that he was d'Artagnan, or would be as soon as he got up. For it was quite settled with his guardian that his school days were over. Even Father Muldoon was

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content that this should be so : he was satisfied with the knowledge that Adam was firmly bound to a Jesuit confessor . . . had advertised the wisdom and piety of Father Ignatius Steele with a tongue energised by an unbalanced brain : also he had proclaimed the idiosyncrasies of Father Tudor . . . but this Father Muldoon pooh-poohed as beside the point, though he let Father Tudor know of it. To Mr Macarthy he expressed it as his wish that Adam, when his brain should be sufficiently recovered to climb Parnassus' higher slopes, should read with coaches (whom he should select for him) with a view to matriculation at the National University. To this Mr Macarthy did not say 'no,' and Father Muldoon avoided the impolicy of asking him to say 'yes.'

If Mr Macarthy's religious ideas were unlike Father Innocent's, his educational methods were wholly remote from those obtaining not only at Belvedere but at Clongowes : he never used the word 'work' in any sense in which Father Tudor or his disciples would have used it. He said no word implying that Adam's formal education was unfinished. Mr O'Meagher agreed with him that nothing more could be done in the boy's present nervous condition, but harped on the subject of preparing him for the National University, with a view to his winning distinction in Gaelic. As for the other guardian, the judicious Mr O'Toole, he desired entirely to be guided by Mr Macarthy. He actually called at St George's Place, neatly attired in flannels, with a straw hat, the M.C.C. ribbon on which made an effective contrast to his black bow tie (to which he was more faithful than to anything else) to exhort his godson to regard Mr Macarthy as one possessing infallibility. 'There's nothing that queer fellow doesn't know,' he assured him. 'You can't go wrong if you follow him.' And Adam was aware that he himself was addressed with a growing respect,

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as one in whom the potent Macarthy had condescended to be interested.

As a corollary to this Adam looked upon his godfather with a less critical eye: the flannel suit pleased him as well cut, which indeed it was, though not for Mr O'Toole, and as he had never heard of the M.C.C., he was not troubled by the unauthorised flaunting of their favour: only the black tie connected this improved godfather with him of unregenerate days. He was going to inquire for his mother when there percolated into his mind an echo of what he had learnt in the Phoenix Park immediately before his catastrophe: he was unable to resolve whether he had really heard it, and perhaps bias suggested that it was told him in his fever. He was startled that Mr O'Toole, looking in his eyes, should say: 'You haven't asked after your mother. And why, indeed, should you? Sure, what does it matter? But she told me to say that she sends you her compliments and would bring them herself if it wasn't for her feet.'

'Feet?' Adam echoed. 'What about her feet?'

'Gout in the big toe,' said Mr O'Toole, describing, in what he believed to be a fashionable manner, that malady commonly called a bunion.

Adam's reply went near to surprising his godfather: 'What sort of a street is Pleasant Street?'

Mr O'Toole studied his expression before answering: 'I don't wonder at your asking that, now; for I'm sorry to say it's not at all the sort of street it was. I'd be thinking of moving now if I hadn't bought two more houses in it.' He added with a sigh: 'That's the trouble about house property, but I've got it in the blood'; and he went away on this, leaving Adam wondering what he meant by having house property in the blood, finally deciding, from the way in which Mr O'Toole had said it, that it was a more agreeable complaint than gout in the big toe.

It pleased Adam that Miss Gannon and Attracta

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both approved of Mr O'Toole: he was surprised that he should be pleased, for he could not bring himself to approve of Mr O'Toole: the black tie reminded him that he had seen him behave in a less courtly manner than that which won the heart of the innocent women of St George's Place. He came to the conclusion that he was pleased at their approval of him, because on hearing him announced he had felt so ashamed of what they might think of him. And it is a ticklish thing to be ashamed of your godfather, particularly if . . . If what? He was too weary to pursue the question. It was best not to think about Pleasant Street at all and growing daily more easy to forget it. Mr O'Toole's visit was not repeated, and would have passed from his mind had not *Attracta* fished out 'The Young Gentleman's Guide' from its hiding-place and decoratively arranged it under his Prayer Book on the side table of misbegotten bamboo, hitherto exclusively reserved for works of piety. Adam was always meaning to expel it thence, but never quite succeeded in summoning up the decision to do so: there was no denying that it was handsomely bound, if you liked that sort of thing: violet plush, with, as inset, a piece of glass encircled by the legend, in Gothic characters, 'The Mirror of Knighthood.' In idle moments Adam sought to use this as a burning-glass with which to turn the sun's beam on passers-by; but the glass was too inferior for that. . . Even *Attracta* found it useless for her toilet.

Meanwhile the summer drifted idly by. He had a feeling sometimes that that morning he had fled from Father Tudor into the silvery dawn he had left all the harsher reality of life behind: even his dreams, and he was always dreaming, little less when awake, were soft, the objects in them having no palpable outline. . . . The sun reached Cancer and swung down to Libra, midway to Capricornus; he was

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fourteen and a half. . . . Then a fantastical thing happened. Going one morning to take the tram at the corner of Hardwicke Street and Frederick Street, he waited for it to come, waited with growing impatience until one at last appeared, but would not stop at his signal, being, as he noticed, full. He waited for another, half an hour by St George's Church : no other came. Supposing that that part of the system was held up through breakage; he walked up to Dorset Street to try the alternative route to the city, and waited there; and so an hour and a half went by, and yet he saw no tram. Overcoming his repugnance to the police, he inquired of a constable the wherefore of this failure.

'Why there's no tram, is it?' said the constable. 'Faith, you'd better ask them at Liberty Hall.'

Adam frowned. 'D'you mean there's a strike?' he asked.

'A strike and a half,' said the constable moodily. He was a fattish man with melancholy eyes, obviously not born to be a policeman, but rather a philosopher; and in a philosophic tone he said : 'You might call it the beginning of the bloody end.'

Perceiving him not to be as other constables, but one who would stay question, Adam asked : 'How can an end have a beginning?'

The constable did not resent the question : he merely said : 'True for ye,' and passed on. He was manifestly very depressed. Adam, abandoning his idea of going into town, turned his steps towards Mountjoy Square, and, finding Mr Macarthy, recounted to him his conversation with the policeman. Mr Macarthy said he was glad to know that there was an intelligent man in the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

'Then,' said Adam, 'things are going to be lively, are they?'

'They're going to be deadly,' Mr Macarthy said, but did not pursue the subject.

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And after that for months there were few trams, and, the strike spreading from calling to trade and trade to calling, there was not a great deal of anything, and that dear; and many died, chiefly among the poor; and some that lived wished they were dead. But Adam kept cheerful, and was glad to be alive, for the realities of life had ceased to trouble him; he lived now in a world of his own, begotten of dreams by books. Even when he was knocked down in a riot and picked himself up just in time to see a policeman slay a man with a blow from his baton on the back of his head, it seemed to him little more than an exciting detail in the pageantry of life. . . . It only made him hate and despise policemen a very little more. After all, it was less cowardly to kill a man, even with a blow from behind, than to twist the arm off a woman, as he had seen policemen do a dozen times when he was an urchin playing in Marlborough Street or selling papers outside the Gresham Hotel.

What impressed him most was the growing ascendancy of Mr Macarthy, whose sitting-room in Mountjoy Square was now so constantly used by various committees that Adam was permitted to take his books into the bedroom, where, sitting by the fire, his eyes would travel from the printed page to the portrait of Erasmus, and that queer advertisement of Mr Oswald Onsin's achievement, and the ugly old crucifix, and the odd Greek text meaning that David the king begot Solomon of her who had been the wife of Urias. He found himself pondering of whom that other David, called Byron-Quinn, had begotten the child to whom his last poem was addressed. He was pondering this one day when he heard the voice of Dr Hillingdon-Ryde saying to Mr Macarthy, in the hall between the two doors: 'I think it very wise of you; but, then, what you do is always wise.'

Adam knew that most people thought his guardian

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wise; he himself thought him as wise as Solomon. And yet Adam might have passed him a hundred times in the street and never noticed him. It was only when he spoke that he roused attention, and he did not waste words. Words. . . . Was there anything that could not be expressed in words? So far as words went, Mr Macarthy seemed to know everything. He never seemed to want a word; he commanded them like a king. But did that prove anything? On Adam's lap lay a book by a fellow called Oscar Wilde, interesting to Adam because someone had shown him the house where he was born in Westland Row: he claimed to be a lord of words. That did not prevent the English sending him to jail for some queer reason. But, then, he was an Irishman, and the English never troubled about reasons for sending Irishmen to jail. When Adam first noticed that Mr Macarthy had the books of Oscar Wilde, he asked his guardian whether they were worth reading, and Mr Macarthy had answered dubiously: 'Perhaps *The Canterville Ghost*,' and added thoughtfully: 'Of course, every book is worth reading really if one were alone with it on a desert island. . . . Even Tinkler's.'

'His poems or his plays?' Adam asked.

'It's an awful choice,' Mr Macarthy said; 'perhaps I ought to say a delicate choice. But you've heard him read his poems, haven't you?'

'That was a long time ago,' Adam said. 'I was only twelve, not old enough to judge.'

'Perhaps not,' Mr Macarthy agreed, and said brightly: 'I'm not sure that I'm old enough to appreciate Tinkler's plays. You'd better hear him read one himself.'

'That would be jolly,' said Adam. 'D'you think he'd read one to us?'

'One or more,' Mr Macarthy answered gloomily.

Adam's enthusiasm was just a little shaken. 'What are they all about?' he asked.

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Mr Macarthy turned to him in sorrow rather than in anger, and said in a carefully modulated voice: 'Adam, my dear boy, I am always charmed to answer your questions, but we really must draw the line somewhere.'

'Are they very bad?' Adam asked, and was astounded by the simplicity of Mr Macarthy's reply:

'I have written worse.' Ere Adam could question him about it, he volunteered: 'Some day I will tell you all about it, but not until you are old enough to appreciate its demerits.'

Chapter Twenty-Five

JOSEPHINE PUTS HER HAIR UP

ERE the second year had passed since Adam made Mr Macarthy's acquaintance at the tea-shop in College Street, he felt as if he had spent his whole life in his company. Not even with Father Innocent had he been on such familiar terms; for many questions now presented themselves to his mind that he knew it had been vain to ask Father Innocent even had he dared to shock him with them: there was none he could not, and few he did not, put to Mr Macarthy. And the more serious questions were always answered on the spot, without attempt to evade the meaning that lay behind the form of the query. And yet, though it was Adam who questioned and Mr Macarthy who responded, Adam felt that he really knew the mere fringe of his guardian's intellectual, or, as Father Innocent would have said, spiritual life: his open and ready answer often suggested that even fuller information couched in the mind that gave so much while it volunteered so little. He came to think of his guardian as one who knew everything, almost as one who could do everything. And he often wondered why he was content to say little and do less; for his spontaneous talk was banter, and his activities of the kind that the late Mr Macfadden had dismissed as womanish. Had he not seen him to be a gentleman and heard him so spoken of even by the exacting Mr O'Toole, Adam would have thought of him as a lady.

This impression was deepened by the fact that Mr Macarthy had many women visitors, of all ages and

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wellnigh all sorts, plain and pretty, dowdy and modish : but they were quite unlike the women among whom his infancy had been passed, or even the prettiest lady to be met in Pleasant Street. The only persons from his earlier portrait gallery whom he could think of as worthy of their company were Josephine O'Meagher and her mother : and he considered, with an emotion strange and bitter-sweet, what Josephine would make of Mr Macarthy if she met him now, and whether she would still want to be a nun, or want to sit again in his lap, after she had dined, or lunched, or supped, or breakfasted with him at Mountjoy Square. A notable thing that ladies should find Mr Macarthy's conversation so wise that they would get up early enough in the morning to share his breakfast with him.

'They must think a lot of you,' said Adam to Mr Macarthy.

'Pure kindness of heart,' said Mr Macarthy to Adam. 'Women are always kind to anyone who appreciates them, and I do : I always did.'

'And so do I,' Adam heartily returned, 'and always will.'

'In time,' said Mr Macarthy.

Mr Macarthy never went to Sandycove : Adam knew, somehow, that Mrs O'Meagher did not approve of Mr Macarthy ; and, although Mr O'Meagher brought from time to time a formal invitation, no one expected it to be accepted. He did not fail to notice that even himself was never asked there when Josephine was at home, and so he ceased to go. If Josephine didn't want to see him, what was the use of his wanting to see her? . . . Yet she haunted his dreams, and more particularly on Friday nights, when the cornet player hung about St George's Church playing 'When other lips' with notably increasing quavers.

But it was startling when, one night after Mr O'Meagher and Herr Behre had dined with Mr

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Macarthy at Mountjoy Square, the former, nervous and distraught, had turned bloodshot eyes on Adam and said: 'You wouldn't know Josephine now: she's got her hair up.'

Adam's tongue failed him. . . . There was a dead silence, until Herr Behre broke it, saying politely: 'You mean your daughter, sir?'

'If you like to call her so,' Mr O'Meagher mumbled, on the verge of tears.

Mr Behre, not understanding the nature of his emotion, went on: 'From your age, she could not be too old for Adam.'

'No woman could be too old for Adam,' said Mr Macarthy, with an air of great indifference; 'he simply dotes on the Marchesa.'

Herr Behre growled laughingly: 'The Church says a man must not love his grandmother.'

Adam saw Mr Macarthy smile, but he had ears for none but Mr O'Meagher, being eager to hear what he might say about himself and Josephine.

Mr O'Meagher took up his theme gruffly. 'I don't know about my daughter being too old for Adam, but I do know that it's a damned shame to persuade her that she's old enough for Christ.'

'Hear, hear,' cried Herr Behre with enthusiasm.

Mr Macarthy asked coldly: 'Why do you allow anyone to persuade her?'

'Hear, hear,' Mr Behre echoed; 'why do you allow anyone to persuade her?'

Mr O'Meagher turned sulky. 'All damn well for you fellows to talk! The girl has a mother.'

Adam looked to Mr Macarthy to say something here, but he held his peace, smiling, though not cheerfully.

But it was Herr Behre who insisted: 'She has a father too.'

Mr O'Meagher's temper rose. 'Bachelors cannot possibly understand what it is to have a wife and family.'

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Mr Macarthy smiled icily. 'Bachelors can perfectly understand what it is to be afraid of a woman.'

And again Mr Behre said: 'Hear, hear.'

Mr O'Meagher shrugged his shoulders. 'You fellows don't believe in anything,' he muttered.

'Excuse me, sir,' the German returned; 'I believe in music and the social revolution.'

'That's something,' Mr O'Meagher declared, 'though you couldn't call it a real belief.' He flung out a denunciatory hand: 'But Macarthy there, with all his cleverness, which I'd be the last to deny, doesn't even believe as much as that.'

Mr Macarthy's smile was more genial as he returned: 'What if I said I believed in cleverness?'

'You wouldn't call cleverness a religion,' said Mr O'Meagher.

'By cleverness and goodness I understand the same thing,' said Mr Macarthy, 'and you won't easily make me believe that you share your wife's faith in the infinite stupidity of God.'

'You're very very harsh now,' Mr O'Meagher protested feebly.

'Not harsh enough,' his host retorted, 'when I think of her urging you to let that child, not half grown up, swear to fritter her life away in the most paltering of all selfish follies.'

Adam was a little shocked by this expression of his guardian's opinion of the calling of a nun: he suspected it to be an intentional over-statement made to excite Mr O'Meagher's wrath. So he was perplexed to the verge of laughter when Josephine's father cried: 'That's what it is!' and, pouring out a stiff whisky, banged his hand on the table to emphasise the words: 'To Hell with the Pope!'

Mr Macarthy filled up his guest's glass with soda-water while he said: 'The Pope has enough troubles of his own; why should we visit ours upon him? No one can compel you to send your daughter into a

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convent if you want to keep her out. She can't even enter of her own accord for years to come if you refuse your consent.'

Mr O'Meagher shook his head pitifully. 'You don't know my wife,' said he.

Adam noticed that at this point Mr Macarthy and Mr O'Meagher were looking in each other's eyes, and that Mr O'Meagher's eyes were the first to give way as Mr Macarthy went on smoothly but firmly: 'I know she is your wife, and I know the law.'

Mr Behre said 'Hear, hear' more than once, and Mr O'Meagher took his departure, promising that he would see what could be done. But Adam had a dismal feeling that no good could come of it all, and that Josephine was lost to him for evermore.

She might haunt his slumbers, but only as one, albeit the most distinguished, of a motley and increasing company. Not long before Adam had had an extraordinary dream about the Marchesa herself. Young and radiant as Anadyomene, she was travelling with him in a railway carriage through Dalkey tunnel. . . . He woke ecstatically to find a full St John's moon throwing the shadow of St George's steeple on his bed: the bells within were ringing midnight. . . . With daylight sad reason had returned to him with the thought that the frowsy old Marchesa had once been young, if not so radiant as in his dream, and, conversely, he who had clothed her in dream youth would ere long be old and perhaps frowsy. The thought startled him so that he washed himself with a great particularity, and vowed that he would so wash to his dying day.

This was the easier, for Mr Macarthy had had a full-sized bath, with a geyser, fitted in his bedroom while he was at the hospital, and no self-denial was called for by his ablutions. But he really had come to love cleanliness for cleanliness' sake, apart from the gratification of his vanity, or even from his sensual

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pleasure in odoriferous soap-suds. Even it added to the glamour of his love for Josephine that he thought of her always as on the night he had kissed her, going to her bath and yet smelling as fresh and clean and fragrant as though she were coming from it. It troubled him greatly, on the other hand, that the Marchesa was so sparing with soap and water; he had seen her looking clean, but so seldom that he recalled the occasions without difficulty. He had the same feeling about her as about Mr O'Toole: that they washed on grand occasions, but not from force of habit. He had believed dirtiness to be one of the few privileges of the lower classes, and he resented the Marchesa's claim to enjoy it: nay, more, he thought it morally wrong of her to give way to it. . . . But then, of course, the Marchesa, though a perfect lady, would not have been deemed by one even so charitable as Father Innocent a virtuous woman: she was, in fact, a . . . He could not hit upon any word to define, morally, the Marchesa. He took pains to find out, and one day said in a modest voice to Mr Macarthy: 'Would I be right, now, in saying that the Marchesa was a harlot?'

Mr Macarthy, who was reading a calf-bound book with the title *Encomium Moriæ*, which Adam took to mean *Moore's Encomium*, looked up pensively to murmur: 'That depends on whom you said it to,' which puzzled Adam so much that he had difficulty in pursuing the subject, holding the simple rule that if a thing was true it could not be too often said.

At last Adam ventured to remark: 'I thought she was a bit too old.'

Mr Macarthy closed his book with a bang, saying: 'What on earth are you talking about?'

'The question is,' said Adam, faltering a little, 'whether the Marchesa isn't too old, and even, perhaps, a bit plain, to be . . . to be . . . what you said she was.'

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Mr Macarthy knitted his brows: 'What did I say the Marchesa was?'

'I don't mean you actually said it,' Adam struggled to explain, 'but you said that it was all right for me to say it if I said it to the right person.'

'What the deuce was it?' Mr Macarthy inquired.

Adam blushed. 'I wouldn't like to repeat it,' he said; 'it began with a "W" . . . No, an "H."'

Mr Macarthy smiled grimly: 'Not a word you learnt at Clongowes?'

'Oh, it's a religious word right enough,' Adam reassured him; 'I got it in the Bible, and it was used of a lady of title, so I thought it'd be right.'

Mr Macarthy reflected a moment. 'I'll tell you what to do,' said he: 'ask the Marchesa herself.'

Adam shrank from the suggestion. 'I don't suppose she'd know what it was,' he blurted.

'Do you?' Mr Macarthy asked point blank.

Adam's first impulse was to say 'Yes,' but actually he said: 'I don't know what it is if she isn't it.'

Mr Macarthy nodded approvingly. 'I'll put it to you this way. The word is a term of reproach, but what it connotes does not necessarily call for reproach. You know Lady Bland, you know the Marchesa: they were at school together. Lady Bland, if she had sufficient command of the language, would probably call the Marchesa a harlot. . . . What the Marchesa would call Lady Bland baffles my imagination.'

'What would I be right in calling her?' Adam asked.

'Why not go on calling her "Marchesa"?' Mr Macarthy suggested.

Adam looked at him doubtfully. 'You think I ought to call her that?' But he was not really satisfied, and he broke out in a fresh place. 'Do you think the Marchesi thinks she could ever have been called anything else?'

'What the Marchesi thinks,' Mr Macarthy gravely

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declared, 'I do not know, and I greatly doubt if he knows himself.'

'Is it true,' said Adam, 'what they tell me, that he's always drunk?'

'Not perhaps always,' said Mr Macarthy.

Adam was very grave as he dropped his voice to ask: 'Do you think it was she that made him take to drink?'

Mr Macarthy shook his head. 'It was more likely that drink made him take to the Marchesa.'

Adam noticed that these words had hardly passed Mr Macarthy's lips when he seemed sorry to have said them, and, in fact, he added: 'That was a silly joke of mine; pay no attention to it. It was just one of those idle words which, I agree with St Matthew, call for repentance . . . if anything does.'

A light broke in on Adam's brain. 'Is it,' he asked, preparing his lips for an unusually long word, and one he had never thought to use before, 'is it unchivalrous of us to talk about the Marchesa?'

Mr Macarthy's reply came slowly. 'It would be unchivalrous of me to discuss her unnecessarily. . . . I don't know that I can blame you for asking questions about her that you put in good faith.' He took up Sir David Byron-Quinn's poems and turned the pages. 'Really, I know very little about the Marchesa, except what she tells everybody, that she was the mistress of the author of this book. That would justify Lady Bland, from her point of view, in calling her a harlot; it would not justify me.'

Adam pondered a long time, and then said: 'It must be a terrible thing for a woman like that to be old and ugly.'

Mr Macarthy looked at him with a fresh interest. 'Have you any reason to suppose,' he said, 'that the Marchesa thinks herself old and ugly?'

Adam stared back at him. 'Sure, she must see it for herself,' he ejaculated.

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Mr Macarthy smiled. 'Don't be too sure,' he begged him. And then, after another short silence, went on: 'The ageing of the body is pathetic, but not necessarily ugly: what is repellent is the enfeeblement or debasement of the mind. That is why drunkenness is the most detestable of all vices: it debauches the mind.'

Several minutes passed before Adam asked: 'Does the Marchesa drink?'

To which his guardian urbanely replied: 'If you have never seen her do it, perhaps she does not.'

'I've sometimes thought——' Adam began.

Mr Macarthy broke in: 'Thoughts of some kinds are best kept to oneself.'

To which Adam responded, in a tone of protest: 'I'm very fond of the Marchesa all the same.'

'So am I,' said Mr Macarthy, 'though it may be for a different reason.' And then, as though to drop the conversation, he went on: 'This is a capital little book to read when you are ill.'

Said Adam with puzzled eyes: 'Isn't it rather depressing?'

'Quite so,' said Mr Macarthy; 'it illustrates admirably the futility of wishing to be alive.'

Adam looked up aghast: 'Is it futile to be alive?' he cried.

Mr Macarthy did not move. 'I spoke of the futility of wishing to be alive,' he said; 'if it were futile to be alive, you may take it for granted that we should all be dead.'

Chapter Twenty-Six

APPROACHING THE RUBICON

'If it were futile to be alive, we should all be dead.' Adam had not infrequent occasion throughout his existence to ponder this apophthegm, but never more than in the days of his crescent adolescence in the year that followed his leaving Clongowes; for he felt the will to life and to death surging like alternate currents through his nerves, and existence took a sombre glory quite unlike the mere dismal melancholy and rank pleasure of infancy. He was at last envisaging life from the standpoint of the gently born and with the advantages of mixing with a society rarely open to one so young: and he knew more about the world already than many whom he met would ever know. And he was now to pass the most guarded gate of youth's experience: to find, as he thought, that there was nothing on the other side.

This event was ever after linked in his memory with Grafton Street: he will never walk up or down that street without looking for something that he may not find. During that winter he would sometimes go on a Saturday by himself to a matinée at the Gaiety Theatre; and one early March afternoon he was returning down Grafton Street that he might dine with his guardian, who would send him home to bed at ten; for Mr Macarthy did not approve of boys of Adam's age being out alone in the Dublin streets at night.

As Adam descended the western pavement, passing Hollander's, which, being one of the more fashionable

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shops, had closed its doors for the week-end, a bright little figure flashed through the doorway cut in the lowered roller shutters, and jostled him so forcibly that he might have fallen had she not thrown her arms round him. . . . He felt the tiny bag she carried on her left arm strike his back with a chink of copper.

'My sweet little man,' she cried, her pretty face, with its brilliant colouring, despite the sallowness, and ardent young eyes alive with an apprehension that held, perhaps, a salt of mockery: 'There now, I nearly killed you. And I wouldn't hurt anything so pretty for all the world.' She released him, adding: 'But, sure, there's no harm done, is there? And you must excuse me, for I've a friend waiting.'

She disappeared as abruptly as she had entered Adam's ken. He stared into vacancy, long and eagerly, desirous to follow her; for she was something even more wonderful than that which in the first shock of encounter she seemed. She was not only a pretty and fascinating and flattering young lady, who had held him momentarily in a tender embrace, from which he would long have tingled even had he not seen her face: but she was Caroline Brady, his first love, who had kissed him on the lips in Dalkey tunnel.

Adam stood awhile, galvanised: then moved on slowly down past the Provost's house to College Green, where he took a tram for Findlater's Church, and walked up Gardiner's Row still glamorously dazed. It was only as he passed Belvedere that he fell gloomy again; for he remembered how once he had associated the school with the happiest promise, and, later, with the most acute and shameful misery, of his life. He wondered, too, how it was that he felt himself no longer to be the same boy that went to Belvedere and was proud of it (for that boy was done to death by Father Tudor), yet did feel quite conscious of being that apparently more remote character who had been so deliciously alive in the train that hurtled down

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Killiney Hill to Bray ever so many years ago. Why, there were boys selling papers outside the Gresham Hotel this evening who had not been born when Caroline Brady had nestled so close to him in Dalkey tunnel, yet he felt now as he did then, only more so—and without being kissed, without even being recognised.

He tried to summon up courage to consult his guardian about this, the subtlest of all mysteries he could imagine on this side of the grave: but he talked in vain about it and about: ending with a flat assertion that he had run into the arms of someone that he thought he recognised.

‘Do you wish,’ Mr Macarthy asked, ‘that you had been recognised?’ a question which, while it forced not the smallest confidence, opened a road for the fullest; yet Adam answered only that he did not know: which appeared to him to be true, if not the whole truth. So his guardian was left in doubt even as to the sex of the body that had met Adam’s in Grafton Street.

His guardian had given him, not so long ago, a brief rule of the road to be followed when alone. If a lady, not certainly and avowedly elderly, or accompanied by children, should accost him in the street, he was to stop at once and answer, to the best of his ability, any one question she might put to him: and, that done, doff his hat, by way of closing the conversation, and go his way. If she offered to prolong the interview, he was politely but firmly to insist on his inability to stay questioning. On no account was he to originate a conversation, even with old ladies.

Adam, temperamentally shy and at a shy age, happily obeyed his guardian’s request: though he found it whimsical of Mr Macarthy that he himself listened to the blandishments of painted women with as patient punctilio as to those of the brilliant Mrs

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Burns, or even Babs herself. It is true that nothing came of it but Mr Macarthy saying 'No' in a hundred ingeniously varied circumlocutions and in a tone more strictly paternal than even that of Herr Behre, whom Adam suspected of a frivolous side not to be detected in his guardian. Mr O'Meagher, when so held up in the street, was sometimes betrayed into rudeness, or at least crude and discourteous agitation: 'Go away now, go away now, will ye?' he would groan. 'I don't want to be seen talking to you, much less anything else.' Assuredly he was not seen to the best advantage in the rôle of St Anthony; though Adam felt his trepidation to be very natural and easier to understand than the detachment of Herr Behre and his guardian.

After all, resistance to temptation was a serious matter; Father Innocent had told him so: and perhaps Mr O'Meagher was tempted the same as he might be himself if overtures were made to him which did not frighten him out of his wits, or, as in the case of the lady in the park, too successfully dissemble themselves. He thought a woman with paint on her face as terrifying as a demon in a pantomime: though, to be sure, it was more of the paint than of what lay beneath it that he was afraid. Of the clean and comely ladies he met in his guardian's society he had no awe whatever. . . . But, then, it was unthinkable that they should offer themselves to him. . . . Did the female ever offer herself to the male? . . . quite of her own accord? He remembered once at the Zoo the tigress had bit the tiger's tail, as a kitten might bite its own, and then assumed the attitude of one of the supposititious Italian nymphs at the National Gallery. . . . Was that just fun, or what? . . . Father Innocent had not been with him on that occasion. He remembered now that Father Innocent, after all, had never brought him to the Zoo: only to the Botanic Gardens. . . . But even flowers made love

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to each other. Even the lilies the boys were encouraged to bring in May to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin: faith, when you came to think of it, the lilies, for all their cold whiteness, had a saucy-looking heart to them. . . . He wondered why they were chosen the special flower of the Blessed Virgin. . . . And the Rosa Mystica: wasn't there some legend about that?

Mr Macarthy had many books of reference: *The Golden Bough* was a queer sort of book. . . . The Blessed Virgin was the mother of Christ: that was what Father Innocent called a mystery: a great many things were mysteries to Father Innocent. . . . Probably Father Innocent had never even heard of *The Golden Bough*: He thought Darwin worse than Luther: what would he think of Haeckel . . .? Lady Bland said the Blessed Virgin was a common woman, as common as Adam's mother. Was Lady Bland nearer the truth, after all, than Father Innocent? He had called her 'the worst woman in Dublin'. Was that because he was afraid of her cleverness? . . . Mr Macarthy said cleverness was a sort of religion. But Adam knew no one so unmistakably religious as Father Innocent, and he was not at all clever. He had killed himself in a mad fit. Madness was a sort of stupidity. . . . Or was it too great cleverness? . . . Perhaps it was your cleverness and your stupidity meeting with a crash and upsetting you. . . . He had met Caroline Brady with a crash, there in Grafton Street. That had upset him, but she didn't seem upset in the least.

Caroline Brady had said that she had a friend waiting for her. . . . He wondered if it was Miss Fallon, her name came back to him now, the other little girl in the train who ate all the sweets, and he used to think pretty. . . . He wouldn't think her pretty now. Caroline had grown up very pretty, as pretty as Josephine herself, almost as pretty as Barbara Burns, but quite different. She hadn't Barbara's well-cut

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features, nor Josephine's red hair, nor that something about Josephine which made her Josephine. . . . He thought about them all quite differently. . . . But he did think about them all. Bluebeard was a bad man : Father Innocent had said so, and there seemed no doubt about it. . . . He must have been a fascinating man too, or else very rich. If you were rich you could do anything, and even the most beautiful and aristocratic and virtuous ladies would give themselves to you, just as if you were a sort of god. You could do exactly as you liked if only you were rich enough. Bernard Shaw, who was a Dublin man himself, and, therefore, to be depended on, advised everybody to get rich as soon as they could, without being too scrupulous as to how they did it.

Yet Mr Macarthy told him that Shaw himself was the most scrupulous man he knew about what he did, though he thought him unscrupulous about what he said. Too whimsical, and with a blind spot of Puritanism, whatever that meant. But he was better than Oscar Wilde, better than all the other Irish writers put together, saving only A.E., the one whose hands were steady enough to speed the plough. . . . Shaw was a fine fellow, and 'Cæsar and Cleopatra' the sort of play that Adam would like to see : but even Shaw's Cæsar would not quite understand what Adam felt about Josephine O'Meagher and Caroline Brady, and perhaps Barbara Burns and some others. Nor could Mr Macarthy help him; for, under his cavalier laugh, he was an austere man, and never kissed more than a lady's hand.

The impact with Caroline Brady woke Adam with a shock to the knowledge that, for all his great and wise and kindly friends, he was, after all, a lonely lad. And why lonely, if not for his lass? . . . And had not Fate and Nature too decreed his lass to be Caroline Brady? . . . True, she was older than he, but Josephine O'Meagher was older still, and consecrated to

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a vestal life, while Caroline was in the world, and warm, and still to be enjoyed . . . By him? . . . Who was the friend she said was waiting for her? . . . Next Saturday, at the same hour, he would be there to see.

So, a fortnight from their first meeting, when the Gaiety Theatre was emptying its matinée audience, he found an excuse to be wandering up and down Grafton Street, from King to Suffolk Street, but mainly outside the closing shutters of Hollander's. And, just about a quarter past five, as Caroline Brady pranced out through the forbidding barrier, looking straight at him with recognition in her smile, a spick and span and lithe Hussar, all frogged blue tunic, cherry breeches, and jingling spurs, whisked her away before Adam's eyes. And he, pursuing, saw them upon an outside car, hailed at the corner of Stephen's Green, bowl gaily out of sight.

Adam thought she looked back at him once and waved the little bag: but he had the sense to tell himself that this was fancy, and that the Hussar had got Caroline Brady clutched as fast as his other rival had clipped Josephine O'Meagher. . . . Something bitter scored his throat as he watched the receding dust that followed their wheels, and he wished suddenly that Caroline Brady was dead.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

VISITORS FOR MRS MACFADDEN

THE thought of Josephine O'Meagher always enraged Adam against the Church: the thought of Caroline Brady temporarily turned him towards it. He told Mr Macarthy that he would like to be a priest, and Mr Macarthy said, 'Pray do, by all means.' Which was not the answer he expected. Nor was he altogether pleased when his guardian offered him every assistance. He was not yet prepared to take any active step towards the novitiate. But, making his Easter Duty at the eleventh hour that year, he did not go to confession to Father Steele, being shy, he knew not exactly why, of confiding to him his new sin. He carried this to the Church beside Westland Row Station, and told his thoughts of Caroline Brady within a biscuit throw of the point whence the pair of them had started on their delectable journey to perdition.

Adam's story was hearkened to by a fervid young priest, who asked him leading questions about his whole life, which it strained Adam's vanity to answer truly. Ultimately this sage young clerk admonished him, a little in the manner of Father Ignatius, but less tactfully, that he should beware of mere worldly wisdom, and remember that, after all, a boy's best friend must be his mother: so long, of course, as his mother was a communicant of the Catholic Church. So Adam, though half perceptive of the absurdity of his confessor's advice, paid his mother a visit on the afternoon of the Sunday he had made his Easter Duty.

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In order to go there it was necessary to mystify his guardian; for Mr Macarthy, being one of the worldly-wise Adam was cautioned to beware of, did not approve of his going to Pleasant Street, even to see his mother: though he never referred to Mrs Macfadden at all if not with respect. She had, however, no place in their conversation, and very little in her son's mind. If the good priest at St Andrew's had not counselled it, Adam might never have seen her again. But on this particular Sunday he felt that it was his duty, as a good little Catholic, to disobey his guardian and humbug himself into a sort of tenderness for his mother.

Adam had lost all admiration for Pleasant Street: but he was gratified to note that No. 7 was certainly the best-kept house in it, with fresh paint and clean windows: though the curtains were a trifle dark and gloomy, so that you could not see the red papered walls from the street, nor could the sun strike through to the mirrors that hung on them. Adam thought mirrors looked well in a room, and so did Mr O'Meagher: but Mr Macarthy did not: and Herr Behre said they were only suited to a public-house. If you had a lot of glasses in a room, that made the room look bigger: and the bigger the room, the finer it looked: that was common sense. But Mr Macarthy said that anything that deceived the eye was false art. . . . Even the Ha-ha at Clongowes was false art, but everyone else, even the Rector and Father Bernard James, thought it beautiful. . . . He was a very austere man, Mr Macarthy, more like a Protestant than a Catholic, and the only symbol of Christianity he had on his own walls was that ugly little crucifix over the bedroom mantelpiece.

Mr O'Toole had furnished the house in Pleasant Street, and even if he was a blackguard, which, despite his fine clothes, Adam suspected, he really had an elegant if high-pitched taste. The best rooms at No.

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7 Pleasant Street, were all red and gold, like a cigar divan . . . the sort of thing you associated with the splendour of the East. Even Mrs Macfadden, promoted from the kitchen to the front parlour, had a red and gold setting to her now somewhat obese charms. But her room, between the mirrors, was hung with Holy pictures and brackets holding scarlet and gold saints, supplied by an eminent firm of saint-makers to the Pro-Cathedral, whose shop window round the corner had, so long as Adam remembered, been a great attraction to this good woman.

The widow lay in bed, suffering not only from her feet but some other disorder which Adam could not identify by her description of the symptoms: he understood that her heart was affected, and so, while the medicine bottles beside her bed were but lightly tapped, the whisky bottle under it was empty. She wore a red dressing-gown, with a red shawl over that, and another over her head, concealing any hair she may have had on it: but there was plenty on the dressing-table mixed up with candles, a greasy plate with knife and fork clinging to it, a porter bottle, and various articles more strictly appertaining to a lady's toilet. On the bed lay *The Police News*, the *Sunday Herald*, and *The Life of St Kevin of Glendalough* by a Nun, modestly preserving her anonymity. 'A beautiful book,' said Mrs Macfadden: 'he was a lovely saint, St Kevin. No one ever saw the like of him.'

'I should have thought Father Innocent was a bit like him,' Adam ventured.

His mother snorted indignantly. 'Will you look at the pictures!' she cried, pitching the book at him; 'just look at the pictures, and tell me whether a grand fellow like that was like that worm of an Innocent Feeley. What woman would go chasing Innocent Feeley, I'd like to know? Not even Emily Robinson did that, though she was always making a fool of herself over the clergy.' She pulled herself up.

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'Kevin was much more like Macfadden, only he had the advantage of him in not taking to drink, and so kept his figure. . . He was a great loss, poor dear. O'Toole was never a patch on him. And the one's as bad as the other in every way but drink.'

Adam was not edified by his mother's conversation, and wondered what the good young priest of St Andrew's, Westland Row, would have made of it. He rose to go: 'I hope you'll be better soon,' he said mechanically.

'No thanks to anyone but Jesus and the Holy Saints if I am,' she retorted. 'It's little anyone cares in this house if I'm living or dead. And I wish I'd never seen O'Toole. Macfadden was the finest man that ever stepped, except St Kevin, and it's hard to believe what they say about him, though we went near Glendalough on our honeymoon to a public I remember well. Macfadden swore at them for being out of Guinness. He let great curses, did Macfadden. It was grand to hear him.'

'You didn't think it grand when he swore at you,' said Adam with sudden bitterness.

'He was worth two O'Tooles, anyhow,' returned the widow: 'he was a man, every inch of him, not a crawling snake with a soft tongue. No one cares a damn for me but St Kevin and the Holy Saints.'

As Adam gazed at the form upon the bed, he shuddered at the thought that he had been borne within it. And the good priest at Westland Row counselled him that here was his best friend; for she was his own mother and a communicant of the Holy Catholic Church: her bed was surrounded by the saints that adorned it, her rosary beads were festooned round one of the knobs, furtive scapulars peeped through the rents in her red dressing-gown, and her Sunday reading was of the Hageology.

His acrid thought was broken by an exclamation

Visitors for Mrs Macfadden

from the sufferer. 'Glory be to God, if there isn't a ring at the door, and O'Toole and Mrs Reddington both out, and me not daring to put one foot out of bed, even if I didn't fall with weakness.'

'Will I open it?' asked Adam, glad of the excuse to go.

The widow hesitated, as though fumbling through crossed thoughts in her mind: 'Sure, I suppose you might as well. After all, what does it matter. . . . Ah, bad luck to your dirty importunity!' This aside was called for by a peal of the bell: 'If it's a lady, you can show her in to me here. If it's anyone else, tell them they're making a great mistake. No matter what they say, you can tell them that. . . . And that it's Sunday, and they've come to the wrong house.' Another peal at the bell—'Oh, for God's sake, tell them to go to hell!'

Adam closed his mother's door behind him and trod listlessly down the hall: there was a pungent smell in it, reminding him of the cat that had helped him to eat his raw goose years ago in the attic up above. He had never had the heart to revisit it. For the first time, in these few steps between his mother's bedroom and the hall-door, he thought of life as a merely sordid, ugly, and meaningless thing. How futile to wish to be alive! . . . Yet Mr Macarthy held that life was not futile: Mr Macarthy had forbidden him to come to Pleasant Street. . . . Well, he was leaving it now for the last time. He wished he could leave Dublin altogether. . . . There was another peal at the bell as he opened the door.

Clinging tipsily to the bell was a handsome young Jew, in the tartan and white summer tunic of the Seaforth Highlanders: his left hand clutched at the waist of a young and pretty girl, who, as her eyes met Adam's, screamed, flung off the soldier's hand, and fled down the steps, and away from the direction of Marlborough Street, towards Summer Hill. Across

Adam and Caroline

the street marched Mr O'Toole, attired in the height of fashion, as it had been prescribed for Punchestown once upon a time.

Adam's cap was in his hand as he left his mother's room: it was still in his hand as he sprang down the steps, between the soldier and his godfather, and set out also to run in the direction of Summer Hill. Behind him he heard Mr O'Toole's voice raised in indignant expostulation.

'You're entirely mistaken. . . . Of a Sunday itself. . . . More shame to you. . . . I seen her meself. . . . A girl of that age. . . . A respectable house. . . . A soldier in uniform. . . . Be off now, me fine fellow, or I'll call the police.'

Chapter Twenty-Eight

LOVERS' MEETING

THE way to Summer Hill was also one of the ways to Mountjoy Square, if you turned up Gardiner Street. But Adam did not turn up Gardiner Street: he ran on and on, so long as he saw a girlish form tripping in front of him, a little bag swinging on the left arm. Suddenly the strap of this burst, and the bag planed lightly down to earth. The girl did not instantly notice her loss, and it was in Adam's hand when she looked back for it. When she saw him he thought she would go running off again; but, as he held it up reassuringly, she turned back slowly to meet him. He studied her as she drew near.

'Aren't you Anastatia Fallon?' he demanded.

She tossed her head indignantly. 'Whatever put such an idea into your head?'

Confusion seized Adam once again, though he had shaken it off as he ran after her: 'I meant to say Caroline Brady.'

'Why didn't you say what you meant?' she returned, guilefully dissembling her own agitation.

'Don't you remember Anastatia Fallon?' asked Adam, his way of asking if she remembered him.

'I do not,' said Miss Brady, taking her purse, 'unless she was the greedy little beast that ate sweets when someone I used to know was on for a bit of fun in Dalkey tunnel?'

'Was that fun?' queried Adam solemnly.

'What else?' asked Miss Brady: 'everything between girls and boys is a bit of fun.'

Adam and Caroline

'And between men and women?' Adam's tone was now gloomy.

'It's a lovely day for this time of the year,' was all the answer he drew from Miss Brady.

There was a dead silence. Adam's eyes that wanted to look into hers failed and wandered away to perceive that they were on the canal bridge near the Dollymount road. Miss Brady, seeing that she had the better of him, asked him his name.

'Didn't you know?' he exclaimed; 'Adam Macfadden.'

'How would I know?' she answered. 'You won't tell me you've done anything anybody has ever heard of, at your age.'

Adam tried to think of something he could boast of, but could recall nothing more thrilling than his encounter with Father Tudor. 'I've done things that would astonish you,' he said vaguely.

'D'you mean in Pleasant Street?' she asked, and a goose chose that moment to walk over Adam's grave.

'That was my mother's house. . . . What did you want there?' he said.

'What does your mother do there?' she rejoined tartly.

It occurred to Adam for the first time that he really did not know what his mother did there. 'My mother lives there,' he said, and added explanatorily: 'with Mr O'Toole.'

Miss Brady smirked. 'Go on! You don't tell me. . . With Mr O'Toole. . . . And you living there all the time?'

Adam broke in with undisguised snobbery: 'I don't live there. I live in Mountjoy Square.' He was shocked to hear himself tell this lie.

Miss Brady betrayed a livelier interest. 'What part?' and Adam had pleasure in giving her the very number.

'I know who lives there,' said she, and described

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Mr Macarthy recognisably, though not as Adam had ever seen him. 'And he's your guardian?' she said at length, adding with a sigh: 'And indeed isn't it well to be you.'

'It is,' said Adam, 'but what makes you think so?'

'I just like the look of him,' said Miss Brady.

'What do you like about it?' asked Adam jealously. 'I think he looks just ordinary.'

'Not a bit of him,' she returned, 'he's quite different from other fellows.'

'You call him a fellow?' Adam protested, 'but I can tell you he's getting on in years.'

'I don't mind that,' said Miss Brady, 'I never cared for hobbledehoy's.'

Adam's heart sank. 'Would you call me a hobbledehoy?'

'You will be in another year or two,' was the intentionally crushing answer.

'I'm not a child,' he claimed.

'Not in your talk, perhaps,' she admitted.

'Not in any way,' he urged. And their eyes met.

'You're a little like your guardian yourself in a small way,' she said thoughtfully.

'I've a handsomer nose,' Adam claimed.

'I like his nose,' she returned provokingly.

'And the nose of that boozy Scotch soldier,' he snorted.

Miss Brady changed colour, but answered calmly: 'That was only a bit of fun. . . . But he'd hold of my arm and wouldn't let go.'

'Why didn't you call the police,' Adam insisted.

'Oh, what good are the police to anyone?' She swung her bag pensively. 'Besides, I couldn't get the poor lad into trouble for a bit of fun.'

'He wasn't a poor lad,' snapped Adam, 'he was a Scotchman, and a Jew into the bargain, and a soldier.'

'What makes you think he was a Jew?' Miss Brady asked with anxiety, real or affected. 'I thought he was in the Black Watch.'

Adam and Caroline

'He wasn't in the Black Watch,' said Adam. 'He was a Seaforth Highlander. But there are very few Highlanders in the Highland regiments, and if he was Scotch at all, he was likely a Glasgow Jew.'

'What a lot you know,' said Miss Brady with open-mouthed admiration that seemed like an echo of the past. 'Where do you get it all?'

'Mr Macarthy,' said Adam, 'knows everything in the world.'

'Of course he does,' said she, 'but even when I met you first at Westland Row, you know, even then you knew a lot. . . And he wasn't your guardian then, was he?'

'No,' said Adam, 'he was not.' He blurted suddenly: 'If he had been I guess we would never have met.'

'If Ifs and Ands were pots and cans,' sang Miss Brady, and looked at him.

'I ought to be getting home to my tea. . . . Come along, will you?'

This was the first time in Adam's life that such an invitation had been directly given him. Miss Brady noted and perhaps misinterpreted his hesitation; for she added querulously: 'You'll meet my Pa and Ma. It's quite . . .

'Quite what?' asked Adam.

'It's not like Pleasant Street.'

'How?'

'My father and mother are very good Catholics.' She seemed proud of this piece of information.

'So is my mother,' said Adam grimly, 'her bedroom's full of holy pictures.'

'Go on!' chirped Miss Brady, 'what a queer family you are.'

'Oh, I don't hang holy pictures in my bedroom,' Adam hastened to assert, 'I think they're silly.'

'Why?' Miss Brady asked, somewhat disconcertingly.

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'Well, they're not the sort of thing a man would have,' said Adam. 'Mr Macarthy has none in his bedroom.'

'What does Mr Macarthy have in his bedroom?' she asked with open eagerness for the answer; but when informed of the leading features she only remarked that she found his taste somewhat gloomy. 'He isn't any sort of a priest?' she demanded.

Adam expressed his moral certainty that though he might have been a priest he was not. 'Nor married?' No, he thought not. 'Nor divorced?' Almost certainly not. 'You won't tell me he has nothing to do with girls at all?' she cried, rather more loudly than was discreet; for they were walking now in a frequented part of the North Circular Road, that part from which Adam had seen a certain funeral approach.

He had forgotten that funeral as he unfolded his theory and account of his guardian's several platonic friendships. He found it necessary to explain to her the meaning of the word platonic. 'The only thing I ever heard of Platonic,' she expostulated, 'was that he and old Socrates didn't care for girls at all. Though Socrates was married, of course, wasn't he? To that scolding old frump, Elsie Somebody?'

'The name of Socrates's wife was Xantippe,' said Adam.

Miss Brady shook her head: 'That wasn't the name. I tell you what . . . Elsie Somebody had a friend called Aphasia, I've got that right anyhow.'

Adam laughed with scholarly contempt. 'Aphasia indeed! Aphasia is a sort of disease of the brain. . . . I suppose you mean Aspasia?'

'Well, Aspasia, then,' Miss Brady allowed with not too good a grace. 'Who was Aspasia?'

Adam, who of late had taken to carrying a bamboo cane, examined it critically, so that he might appear more like a man of the world: 'Aspasia,' he said, 'Aspasia was an Athenian lady.'

Adam and Caroline

'What sort of a lady is that?' his companion asked, looking down on him sideways.

'An Athenian lady means a lady of Athens,' he said gravely.

Miss Brady looked at him harder, and he looked harder at his cane. She said: 'Is that all?'

'That's all,' said Adam.

'Then,' Miss Brady suggested, 'I suppose you'd call me a Dublinian lady?'

Adam supposed a trifle dubiously that he would.

'Perhaps you wouldn't think me a lady?' said Miss Brady, 'because I work at Hollander's. But I'm in the showroom where they have a baronet's daughter for a mannikin, and she treats me like a perfect lady, and kisses me every time she sees me, and says I'm quite her equal if not better. And she has the loveliest neck and shoulders, and it makes me sick to think she's a Protestant.'

'Why would that make you sick?' asked Adam.

'You wouldn't like to think that anyone kissing you was going to hell!' she exclaimed hotly, adding: 'Unless, of course, it was just a bit of fun.'

'No one goes to hell for a bit of fun,' said Adam reassuringly.

'Not if they've time to repent,' Miss Brady agreed, 'but you do right enough if you're a Protestant. . . . I was trying to explain that to the fellow in the Black Watch. . . .'

'Seaforth Highlanders,' Adam corrected her.

'Seaforth Highlanders,' she said dutifully, 'I was trying to explain that to him when he got me by the arm and said only Presbyterians could be saved, and as I wasn't a Presbyterian I might as well enjoy myself while I could.'

'And I suppose,' snorted Adam indignantly, whipping a sardine tin off the pavement, 'I suppose he thought you could enjoy yourself with him?'

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'I suppose he did,' said Miss Brady, 'and I suppose you think I could enjoy myself with you?'

'If you don't think so,' returned Adam, 'why did you ask me to see you home?'

'That was just a bit of fun,' said the charmer, and Adam found they were no longer in the Circular Road. 'Here we are.'

She opened the creaking gate of a narrow-chested little house, as respectable as an undertaker and drearier than a mute; for, though facing south it was so beset by other people's dead walls that no sun could strike below the eaves. The street was called Spring Avenue, but it led nowhere.

Adam's heart quailed, and Miss Brady did not fail to notice the dullness in his eyes. 'You don't want to come in?' she said. 'My house isn't good enough for you. . . . It's better than Pleasant Street. . . . Only I'm not kept by someone living in Mountjoy Square. . . . I wish I was.'

'What do you mean?' Adam babbled. 'I'm sure this is a very nice house. I'd like to come in, only my guardian. . . .'

'You'd think your guardian wore apron-strings,' she pouted, then whispered in his ear: 'Come in now, and I'll do something will make you think of Dalkey tunnel.'

As though in obedience to the magic of a cabalistic word Adam's legs, as thin as Miss Brady's own, passed through her creaking gate-way, over the two slabs to her hall door. Astonishing was the melancholy of that hall door, contrasted with the triumph in Caroline Brady's brown eyes and tawny cheeks as she knocked at it.

But the figure that opened it went with the door. She was dark like Caroline but pale, and her brown eyes were pale too, and dull like the paleness of puddled, rather chalky clay: her hair, too, had chalky streaks in it: and she wore clothes which made Adam

Adam and Caroline

take her to be recently widowed and convinced him that it was she whom he had seen with Caroline in the mourning coach. He felt unpleasantly certain that in some unaccountable way she was Caroline's mother, and he wondered if her father should prove to be the man he associated with the memory of a proprietorial black glove. Caroline said her father lived also in that mean sepulchre of a house. Even with Caroline's warm body pressing against his in the rat-hole of a hall, he could not think of Dalkey tunnel. He could not think of anything but the beetles that used to crawl on the rocks at Sandycove when he sat there long ago of a summer evening with Josephine O'Meagher. He remembered that so long as she held his hand he could pretend not to be afraid of the beetles: but when she was called by her mother into the house, he ran after her like mad.

Caroline Brady was not a bit like Josephine O'Meagher: even her kiss, he could still remember, tasted quite different. But Mrs Brady reminded him of everything he disliked (not a great deal) in Josephine's mother; and Mr Brady, whom they now discovered reading the *Catholic Herald*, in the front parlour, the walls of which were covered with photographs of gravestones and memorial cards, did not live up to the promise of his proprietorial black glove. He himself was as one long dead but too insignificant to call for burial. Adam could as little think of him as being Caroline's Pa as he could think of the late Mr Macfadden as being his own father.

Caroline introduced Adam as 'My little friend Macarthy. Lives in Mountjoy Square. He was with me at the Nuns at Bray when we were kids. I knew him at once when I saw him after Twelve O'clock. We went for a walk and missed lunch. So I brought him home to tea.'

Caroline's parents asked no question: the mother provided nasty tea and nastier thin bread and

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margarine. She seemed very fond of Caroline. Mentioned that she was the only survivor of twelve, and indicated the photographic Valhalla on the walls.

'They were all insured,' said Caroline; 'weren't they, Pa?'

Mr. Brady laid down the *Catholic Herald* to murmur solemnly: 'They were all insured. . . . They were all insured. . . . Thank God, they were all insured.' Then he resumed his reading, leaving Adam more than content with his succinct contribution to the conversation.

At last Adam read in his ensorcerer's eye her leave to go, and he rose hurriedly; for night was falling. He nerved himself to shake Mrs Brady and even Mr Brady by the hand. Then he found himself alone with Caroline Brady in the hall, which was now pitch dark; for she had closed the parlour door deliberately behind them.

'Does this remind you of Dalkey tunnel?' she whispered, taking him in her arms and kissing him deliciously, incredibly, overwhelmingly, as he had only dreamed that it might be possible to be kissed. When she let him go, he passed through the doorway, fierily and magically in love with her: but his passage over the slabs was as across running water; for at the creaking gate she said in valediction: 'Will I tell you who I could enjoy myself with?'

And when he nodded eagerly to hear his own name fall from her lips, she whispered in his ear: 'Your guardian, Macarthy. . . . Will you tell him that?'

Chapter Twenty-Nine

THE BRINK OF THE RUBICON

ADAM'S face was still on fire when he fronted his guardian, very late for supper, that Sunday night.

'Why do you look at me as if you wanted to bite me?' was the only question the latter put to him. And Adam answered at once, with not only honesty but feeling self-abandonment, that he did not want to bite him, and would not injure him for all the world. But from the bottom of the dead wall in Spring Avenue, even so far as the top of Fitzgibbon Street, he had been smothering the shrieks of Caroline and his guardian in boiling oil. And, despite his fair words to his guardian that evening, as St George's bells were ringing three the next morning, he transfixed on the one sharp dreamland blade the forms of both found huddled together in the shed in Mountjoy Square: only in this dream Mr Macarthy was not really himself so much as Father Tudor, and Caroline Brady filled his cup of bitterness to overflowing by embodying the charms of Josephine O'Meagher with her own.

Of one thing Adam was quite determined as he rose firmly to take his cold bath on Monday: nothing on earth would induce him to have anything more to do with Caroline Brady. . . . Of all the witches! La Belle Dame, sans merci, was a fool compared to her. . . . Would he do anything about that message . . .? Do anything to betray his kind old guardian into her clutches? Perish the thought!

As the day wore on he was conscious of a greater

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and greater need for virtue to resist the temptation to walk up Grafton Street about closing time: but, assisted by the fact that Mr Macarthy found reason for keeping him unusually busy, his virtue was triumphant. And, as he left Mountjoy Square at a quarter past ten to go home to bed, he was felicitating himself upon his strength of character, when he saw a white hand beckoning him from the dark side by the square railings.

He was too frightened to obey: particularly lest his guardian might be watching from the balcony above: but at the corner of Gardiner Street he stopped and awaited developments.

A delightfully mysterious little dark figure danced across to him: 'Why did you run away?' asked Caroline, her voice soft and full of the most caressing reproaches.

'I didn't run,' Adam said, even yet in a whisper. 'You didn't want him to see us, did you?'

'I didn't want him to see me if he didn't want to,' said Caroline loudly. 'I don't want anyone to see me if they're ashamed of it.'

'I'm not ashamed of it,' returned Adam hotly, 'I'll walk past the house now if you dare me to.'

She pressed his hand, but only said: 'Did you give him my message?'

'I did not,' said Adam, 'and I won't. . . . I won't even so much as mention your name to him.'

Her voice hardened. 'And why not, I'd like to know?'

His answer came quickly: 'Because I want to keep you all to myself.'

Her voice softened. 'You little silly. . . . As if you could, at your age.'

His answer came trembling: 'Couldn't you wait till I grow up?'

Miss Brady laughed softly and caressingly, almost musically: but she only laughed, and Adam felt it was cruel of her only to laugh. Against it he said: 'I'm waiting for you to answer my question.'

Adam and Caroline

Miss Brady's voice fell very low to say: 'I thought you only wanted a bit of fun.'

'I never think of you,' said Adam, 'as being at all funny.'

Her voice trembled now as she said: 'Don't let on you ever think of me at all.'

'Ever since Dalkey tunnel. Often.' He spoke fervently.

'The same as I've thought of you?' the words fell like kisses in his ears.

He did not touch her, but came so close that he was not sure if he were touching her or not: 'When do you think of me?'

She seemed almost to advance towards him as she whispered: 'About this time. . . . Going to sleep.'

Said Adam: 'Do you ever dream?'

She answered: 'If I'm not funny, you are. Everybody dreams about all sorts of people. I often dream about . . .' She checked herself sharply, but Adam felt once again the unspoken name pierce his heart. The momentary spell was broken, and he noticed the moonlight playing on the steps of the Jesuit Church. Over the roofs of the Gardiner Street houses came the bells of St George's ringing eleven.

'Time for respectable young ladies to be in bed,' said Miss Brady. 'Do you think you're old enough to see me home?'

This being, as it were, a challenge, Adam took it up and said that, of course, he would see her home: but he appreciated the delicacy which made her choose the west and south sides of the square for their route, and so home down Great Charles Street: something of a roundabout to Spring Avenue. They spoke little as they walked, their shadows preceding them, Caroline's humiliatingly the longer, so far as the North Circular Road. In Spring Avenue there was no moon: the dead walls forbade it to enter there.

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'It comes into my room at the back,' said Caroline 'and often keeps me awake all night.'

'And it comes into mine,' said Adam, 'but it only makes me dream.'

'What a little dreamer you are, to be sure,' she laughed, like the wind rustling. 'I believe you'd dream away your whole life when you're not reading the dictionary.' She clapped her hands on his eyes and whispered: 'Dream now that I'm kissing you.' He felt her lips rove dazzlingly over his. Then she said, still in a whisper: 'Would you like to see the moonlight in my room?'

'Yes,' he answered huskily, clenching his hands.

Whereupon she replied, with a grim chuckle: 'Well, you can't. . . . Dreamers are no use to me.' Then the gate creaked, a latch-key clinked, and the door of her little tomb snapped behind her, before the pressure of her hand had passed from Adam's eyes.

Dizzily he scrambled out of the dark street, to be startled in the moonlight at the corner of the Circular Road by the shadow of a man: his guardian. Mr Macarthy, saw him home, their shadows pursuing them briskly up Fitzgibbon Street to St George's Place. There was no reproof nor even question: but, bidding him good-night, he said smoothly: 'This must not occur again,' and Adam answered humbly: 'No, sir.'

For the next four days Adam's conduct, habitually good, was irreproachable. But Saturday found him feverishly watching for her outside Hollander's. And, joy of joys! there was no trim Hussar, no tipsy Semitic Highlander, no Macarthy-like civilian to claim her now. He had her to himself for a little while. She seemed even to expect him; for she said: 'Why haven't you come all this long while?'

'Long while?' Adam ingenuously echoed: 'Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday?'

'I do know the names of the days of the week,

Adam and Caroline

ignorant as I am,' she retorted, and went on sharply: 'By the way, I remembered last night in bed, the wife of Socrates was called Elsie-buy-a-dress.'

'Nonsense,' said Adam; 'I tell you her name was Xantippe.'

'It's no use your saying "Nonsense,"' she retorted; 'I tell you it's true.'

'But who ever heard of such a name?' said Adam.

'I have, often and often,' she declared; 'I suppose it was a sort of nickname, like I know a fellow calls me "Carrie-bit-of-fun."'

Adam groaned and made no answer.

'I'll take the tram from College Green to the Rotunda,' she said with affected indifference: and Adam, waking up, urged her to drink tea with him. She asked him whither he proposed to take her, and when he mentioned the café in College Street, shook her head: 'Anarchists go there,' said she.

Adam foolishly said 'Nonsense' once again.

'But I tell you they do,' she insisted. 'I know all about it. It's a dreadful place I wouldn't be seen dead in.'

'Have you ever been in it?' he said, with an obstinacy equal to her own.

'As if I would! I'm told Sinn Feiners go there as well as Anarchists. Even that old baggage, Marquisa Thingumy they call her, Lord Garryhestie's aunt, who married the Italian like a monkey on a barrel-organ: I've seen him at Mooney's.'

Adam answered smartly: 'I can tell you, people go there who wouldn't go to Mooney's.'

'I dare say people go to hell who wouldn't go to heaven,' she rejoined.

And Adam, quite forgetting his caution, blurted: 'Anyhow, Mr Macarthy thinks it good enough for him.'

A change swept over Miss Brady's attitude, and she put her best leg forward. 'Come along,' said she, and

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she whirled him past Tom Moore's statue in the twinkling of an eye. . . 'Will we find him there now?' she asked as they blew in through the door.

'Perhaps,' said Adam, knowing well that they would not; for Mr Macarthy had for some months ceased to go there, or Adam would not have ventured. He was, however, almost more distraught to find himself hailed by his other guardian, Mr O'Meagher.

'That's a queer thing, now, a very queer thing. It was thinking of you, Adam, brought me in here to-day. And talk of the devil, there you are. This young lady is not with you, is she? . . . If she is, introduce me. . . . And if she isn't, sure, it doesn't matter: I'll talk to her all the same.' Such was the greeting of Mr O'Meagher.

Adam murmured distractedly the name of Miss Brady, and Mr O'Meagher addressed himself to her: 'Our friend Mr Macfadden has great taste in female beauty, Miss O'Brady: not that I pretend to be a judge of it myself; for I've a grown-up daughter that might be older than yourself, and what good would I be saying whether Juno or Minerva or Venus herself was the loveliest lady of all the goddesses?'

'I'd have thought,' said Miss Brady demurely, 'that you were not too old for a bit of fun.'

Mr O'Meagher shuffled his feet and coughed. He seemed to be making an effort to grow serious. 'O'Brady,' said he, 'is a Connacht name, and I'm what the poet calls Nature's M.P. for that part of the world. So, whatever you may be, Miss O'Brady, I'm the man to fight your battles.'

'Thanks awfully,' said Miss Brady, her manner stiffening, and, perhaps, modelling itself on the baronet's daughter in Hollander's showroom. 'I've never been to these out-of-the-way places myself, but I'm sure it's very nice to know that you come from there.'

Mr O'Meagher sighed. 'Oh, indeed, I'm sorry to

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say I don't come from Connacht. I'd be proud to do so, but I'm still prouder that I'm a Munster man, the same as another friend of our friend here, Mr Mac-arthy.'

'Has he been in here to-day?' she asked promptly.

Mr O'Meagher stared at her: 'And is he a friend of yours too?' he asked.

'You can hardly call him that,' Miss Brady answered coolly, pouring out Adam's tea for him with the gravity of a honeymooning bride. 'But Adam and I are always talking about him.'

'Does Adam talk about him to you or you to Adam?' Mr O'Meagher sharply queried. 'And how long has "always" been going on?'

'How long have we known each other, dear?' Miss Brady asked Adam, and Adam, with his mouth full, answered: 'Oh, years and years.'

'Indeed, now,' pursued Mr O'Meagher; 'and was that before you came to Sandycove?'

Seeing Adam at an incomprehensible loss, Miss Brady said sweetly: 'We met through the Nuns at Bray, didn't we, Adam?'

'The Nuns at Bray, yes,' Adam gulped out, glad to be fixed at last.

'The devil, you did,' muttered Mr O'Meagher, adding gloomily: 'That reminds me, Josephine is to be received on Corpus Christi.' Then he heavily asked: 'How long is it since you've seen Josephine?'

'Years and years,' repeated Adam, borrowing his questioner's gloom.

Mr O'Meagher smiled grimly: 'It seems the Nuns at Bray gave you Miss Brady here, and took away Josephine.'

'They were different nuns,' Adam thought it necessary to explain.

'I should think they were,' said Mr O'Meagher, 'and dealt in very different goods. . . . I won't deny that Miss Brady is a pretty young lady.'

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'You're humbugging,' Miss Brady giggled, to Adam's extreme annoyance; 'and who is Josephine, if it isn't rude?'

'Merely my daughter, ma'am,' Mr O'Meagher admitted, bowing respectfully over his tea-cup.

'Go on!' cried Caroline. 'You haven't a daughter going to be a nun?'

'I have that,' said Mr O'Meagher.

'Well, I'm . . . surprised?' protested Miss Brady, 'that you of all men would send a girl where she'll never have a bit of fun.'

'I would, indeed, be the last to send her,' Mr O'Meagher agreed, then eyed her askance: 'But all the girls are not in convents who have to go without any fun.'

'Then they must be as ugly as sin or dotty in the crumpet,' said Caroline brazenly.

Mr O'Meagher glanced uneasily from her to Adam and back again. 'How old are you, my dear?' he asked.

Caroline answered, with her pleasantest smile: 'I suppose you think I'm old enough to know better. That's what my Pa says when he says anything, but generally always he says nothing.'

'He's a wise sort of fellow, your Pa,' said Mr O'Meagher. 'I wish there were more like him.'

'I've only the one I ever heard of,' said Miss Brady. And Mr O'Meagher, staring at her again, asked Adam what were his plans for the evening; who explained that he was on his way home when he met Miss Brady.

She interjected: 'It's not often we meet, for such old sweethearts.'

'You went joy-rides in the same perambulator?' grunted Mr O'Meagher.

'You might say we did,' said Miss Brady, 'away there under Killiney Hill.'

Mr O'Meagher pursed his lips: 'Well, well,' quoth he, 'this is an eye-opener to me. And I don't know

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what to make of it. . . . But, of course, if Mr Macarthy thinks it all right . . .'

'There's no one in the world like Mr Macarthy,' she broke in eagerly.

Mr O'Meagher rose, saying: 'Faith, that's not Mr Macarthy's fault.' And, with this mysterious epigram, he bade them good-evening.

Caroline laid her hand on Adam's arm: 'Did you hear what he said about Macarthy?'

'He's always joking,' was Adam's extemporised apology; 'I've never known him to be serious even about his daughter entering a convent. . . . Though I know he hates it like poison.'

'Men are so selfish,' Miss Brady declared. 'I'm sure she'll be happy until it's too late to be anything else.' Having given time for this to sink in, she added: 'I often think I have a vocation.'

'You!' was all Adam could say to this.

'Don't stare as if I had smallpox,' she admonished him; 'it comes and goes. But the vocation's there right enough, and some day it may come to stay.'

'What sort of a convent would you enter?' asked Adam, imagining that she demanded to be taken seriously.

'There you have me,' said Miss Brady; 'the head of it would have to be pretty nippy; for I never could bring myself to obey anybody.'

Adam, gulping down his last fragment of toast, asked: 'How do you manage at the shop?'

She shrugged her shoulders. 'Oh, I just let on and make myself pleasant, and Miss Smith-Pink says that if I go she goes too.'

'Who's Miss Smith-Pink?'

'The baronet's daughter. She is a lady and a half, and she has the loveliest bust you ever saw. . . . Not that I suppose you ever saw more than one, or maybe two.'

Adam gravely assured her that he had seen several at the National Gallery, whereupon Miss Brady

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indulged herself in a peal of modulated laughter. 'I don't mean busts made of bricks and mortar, or sawdust, or whatever they are, but busts like my own or Josephine's.' She turned her eyes on him. 'I suppose you've seen Josephine's: the old fellow talked as if he thought you had.'

For answer, Adam reddened to the roots of his hair, and his lips alternately quivered and were unnaturally firm. . . . Miss Brady's colour thereupon also heightened. 'You and your Josephine! She wasn't born in a convent, was she? Did ye never bathe together when you were kids?' her tone sharpened, 'Because she has a blessed vocation, which as likely as not means stuff and nonsense, that ought to be spanked out of her, if her Pa were a man worth talking to. D'you suppose she has different ribs from you and me?'

Adam expressed in dumb show his annoyance at the suggestion that Miss O'Meagher had ribs.

'Well, you are a little silly,' said Miss Brady, 'wasting your money giving me tea and cakes and dreaming about your Josephine all the time. . . . And she sticking her fingers to her nose at you out of a convent window for ever and ever, world without end, Amen.' She rose to go.

Adam looked up wistfully in her face: 'I can't help loving Josephine O'Meagher,' he said, 'any more than I can help loving you.'

Caroline, holding his eyes with hers, sat down again, to say in his ear: 'You needn't help loving me . . . I'm not a nun, and wouldn't be if I'd fifty vocations; for I think it's cowardly.'

'It isn't cowardly,' Adam protested, 'or Josephine wouldn't do it.'

'Then it's cowardly of you to let her do it,' she snapped.

Adam stared at her open-mouthed. 'However could I help it?' he expostulated. 'I'm not old enough to do anything.'

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'You're old enough to do a lot more than you think,' he was surprised to hear.

'How? What do you mean?' he gasped.

'I mean with your humbugging blue eyes.'

She fired this compliment as it were point blank, and brought down Adam's flag so that he mumbled: 'I suppose I don't really care for her as much as I care for you.'

Miss Brady eyed him suspiciously. 'Did you really mean it when you told her father you hadn't seen her for years?'

'Word of honour,' said Adam, 'and I don't suppose I'll ever see her again.'

'Well, then, I tell you what,' said Miss Brady, and paused to give an edge to Adam's curiosity.

'What?' repeated Adam.

'On Whit Monday Bank Holiday: that's Monday week: you be at the corner of our street at ten past three'—she paused again.

'Yes,' said Adam breathlessly, 'the corner of your street at ten past three, and what about it?'

She smiled at him. 'What do you think about it?'

'I don't know,' said Adam; 'what do you think?'

'Supposing,' said Miss Brady, 'supposing we go somewhere and maybe never come back?'

'Never come back?' Adam echoed, round-eyed at the prospect of such wild romance.

'Maybe we'll not come back the way we went, anyhow,' said Miss Brady, and leaped to her feet. 'I must hustle home now. Be good.' She gave him her hand: 'Don't come with me: I've no time now for dilly dally, and I'll not see you until Monday week; but it's the corner of Spring Avenue, at ten past three, and don't you fail me, wet or fine.'

'Wet or fine,' said Adam fervently, as if she had named their wedding day. That moment he felt himself a man, but he was humiliated five minutes later to find that she had paid for their repast.

Chapter Thirty

THE POWERS OF DARKNESS

THE days between that and Whitsuntide Adam passed in a waking dream, vaguely conscious that his guardian watched him all the while with an anxious air that, when Adam plucked up courage to look at him, melted into his normal Sphinx-like smile. He wondered if Mr O'Meagher had said anything of the encounter at the College Restaurant. He almost wished that he had, and that Mr Macarthy would demand an explanation: but Mr Macarthy seldom asked other than abstract questions, unless they arose from some topic of conversation on which Adam offered an improvisation. When Adam was on the verge of suspecting himself of talking nonsense Mr Macarthy would break in with a cautionary inquiry. This served to clear the air and bring Adam's view of facts into sharper focus. He had early recognised as a difference between Mr Macarthy and all the others, save, perhaps, Father Innocent, that he avoided that form of inquiry which tempted double-faced answers.

It was not fear that kept Adam from telling Mr Macarthy about Caroline Brady so much as the conviction that if Mr Macarthy were in Adam's place he would keep the secret to himself. He tried to imagine a youthful Macarthy in love with a pre-Adamite Caroline Brady: but he could not imagine his guardian young or in love, and was only irritably reminded of the actual Caroline's repeated confession of desire for him.

He felt it was perverse of Caroline to pretend to be

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in love with a man old enough to be her father, and he knew not whether to be glad or sorry that she never used her favourite colloquialism with reference to him. But Adam's mind during those days was not in a condition for pellucid thinking. Josephine O'Meagher had always been to him a distinct figure : but Caroline from the beginning of things had a diffused identity. Even that first wonderful kiss she had given him in Dalkey tunnel had been enjoyed under the illusion that it came from someone else. And after that he had for years believed her to be dead, and found full satisfaction in life without her. And now that he had met her again, he had wished more than once that she were dead. . . . And yet felt it a tragedy of self-denial to pass twenty-four hours without a caress from her. . . . And yet, when he walked the streets, he constantly imagined that this, or that, or the other girl must be she. He saw her everywhere there was a petticoat draping thin legs : he never mistook any passer-by for Josephine O'Meagher : though he could not swear for a positive fact that Josephine's legs were not of wood below the knees, and of bricks and mortar or sawdust (as Miss Brady conceived Aphrodite's to be) above.

Caroline's view of life baffled him : a dreamer about himself, he demanded of others that they should be downright. Every word she said to him he took to be seriously meant, most of them he remembered, few he could reconcile, and taxed his brain to make sense of the confused expressions of her jig-saw mentality. He believed absolutely that she did sometimes think that she had a vocation : he believed it possible for her to have a vocation, just as he believed it possible that he himself might have one. . . . He conceived of a vocation as something that came to you unaccountably in spite of yourself. . . . Why did Caroline think it cowardly of Josephine O'Meagher to enter a convent? To him it seemed extraordinarily brave.

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The thought of it frightened him, frightened him far worse than the thought of death, and the thought of death seemed to him one of the most undesirable of all thoughts, except when he connected it with a romantic issue. Thus, he would have thought it delightful to die for his country, though not quite clear as to what he meant by this; for no one seemed to know what a country was. . . . The Intermediate Education Board had succeeded in driving the possibility of discovering any real meaning in the word patriotism out of his mind: to ask an Irish boy to regard England as his country was to demand of him the impossible, but, at the same time, to demonstrate that he had no country of his own. He thought that when he grew up he might travel all over the world in search of a country that he might make his own, and then, if occasion should arise, die for it. . . . Meanwhile his wish to die for his country was a mere form of piety impossible to put in practice.

Nearer home was the other greater and more romantic possibility, that of dying for his love. . . . Ere he had yet learnt to swim he had saved Caroline Brady from drowning: repeatedly he had done the same for Josephine O'Meagher, and more than once for Barbara Burns, but only from the high running seas of his conceit, so they never thanked him. To do him justice, he was too humane to wish them in peril that he might make sure whether he had the courage to rescue them or not: he forgot that he had not the strength; for although since his bicycle accident he had lost some of his activity, he swam pretty well, yet an effort to support any of these comparatively large ladies in the water would not have succeeded. . . . On the other hand, how delicious to die with them. . . . With any one of them: to die with all of them together he recognised as something a little pretentious, what was the word, unchivalrous. The

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knights of Christian chivalry had but one lady love at tragic moments : he was less certain of the custom of the Paynim palladins. West was west for him, and he stuck to the Christian ideal, still, to die with Josephine would be to enter heaven : failing that, to die with Caroline would be exquisitely mysterious : to die with Barbara would be vastly interesting, though, he feared, impossible, because of her snobbery. . . . She could not forget that she was the granddaughter of a baronet, and yet there was Caroline Brady working in the same showroom with a baronet's daughter, Miss Smith-Pink. He wondered if Miss Smith-Pink were any relation of the Mr Porphyro Smith-Pink who had recited 'Who Fears to Speak of Ninety-Eight?' the first night Adam had visited the Six Muses Club. That Mr Smith-Pink was a Sinn Feiner, he believed. . . It was ignorant of Caroline Brady to suppose that Sinn Feiners were worse than anarchists. Anarchists were the dregs of society, except Mr Behre, who called himself a philosophical anarchist : philosophical anarchists were not infrequently princes, like Prince Kropotkin, whose books Mr Macarthy had, and told Adam that he ought to read; but Adam could not read economics. He wished he knew, without the trouble of reading them, what was the difference between a philosophical anarchist and the common variety; he wondered if it were possible that the philosophical anarchists were people who would not do what they thought they ought to do, and the other anarchists people who did what they thought they ought not. He knew, anyhow, that the word anarchist meant one who was against the law, but his experience of life showed him that everybody was against the law when he found it interfered with him. The Government itself that made the law made no attempt to keep it; as for the police, they seemed to him to do as they liked. . . . There was Father Tudor again : everyone agreed that he had no right to do as he did, yet because he was a

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strong man no-one had the courage to make him stop it.

With such thoughts chasing through his brain, Adam lived through the week before Whit Monday. He longed passionately for that day, and yet there was something innocent in it all, even in the very passion. Side by side with his longing to enjoy his love went a counting and recounting of the years that separated him from the possibility of marriage. On the very Saturday morning it occurred to him that he would go to confession once again to Father Ignatius Steele. . . . He would, after all, seek his advice as to how he might purge his soul of any shade of sensuality in his thought of Caroline Brady.

At three o'clock down Gardiner Street he went, and up the church steps, making reverently this time a sign of the cross with the holy water in the font, and praying a little while before the high altar ere he sought the Ignatian chapel. As he approached Father Steele's box, he saw an old lady come out, and a grey-haired man, whom he thought he remembered to have seen there before, go in. Only one other was waiting at that side of the box, so there Adam knelt down to make his final preparation. He found himself reviewing not only the past weeks but his whole life; for he was determined to say all frankly to Father Steele that could throw light upon the present. And, thinking of how he had first come to meet Caroline Brady in that cab outside the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, he thought of that other meeting outside the Gresham Hotel which had driven him into hospital. As he was thinking of this, visualising the horror of that meeting, he heard the shutter of the box near him click, and the old man's voice muttering his sins. It seemed to Adam that it was a whining tale, the whine of a whipped mongrel. Adam felt it uncanny that a man should be so sorry as all that even for his sins, and wondered what vileness the old man was telling. After a long

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while the slide clicked again, the door opened, and the old man came out.

Adam knew it was uncharitable to look at him, but could not resist the temptation, and there he saw his face, drawn with a caitiff's repentance, struggling against the easier line of false benevolence, the face of Old Comet, the police spy.

With a sudden snap of the teeth, Adam sprang up and walked out of the church. He could not share his God with Old Comet.

Chapter Thirty-One

ON THE EVE

WITH a new and unrecognisable emotion, not even resembling that in which he left the Pro-Cathedral, save only for the purposes of his Easter Duty, for the last time, Adam marched straight out of the church of St Francis Xavier and walked swiftly back to St George's Place. Usually he avoided touching on any religious subject with Herr Behre; deeming this to be something about which he and the musician never could agree. But to-day he was in the mood to talk with him about it. He went directly to his room, and, finding him there, told of his meeting with the police spy.

Herr Behre chuckled grimly. 'Has Mr Macarthy never made it clear to you,' said he, 'that a Jesuit is himself but a police spy of the Pope?'

Adam shook his head. 'I never heard Mr Macarthy say a word against any priest, not even Father Tudor.' This was not strictly true, but, as Adam had never heard Mr Macarthy say anything against Father Tudor which he thought half bad enough, he was under the impression he had said nothing at all.

Herr Behre shrugged his shoulders. 'Mr Macarthy,' said he, 'is half a Jesuit himself.'

Adam recalled what Father Clare had said to him at Clongowes. 'Was he ever in orders?' he asked.

Herr Behre walked up and down the room and again shrugged his shoulders. 'Does anyone know what Mr Macarthy has or has not been?' he murmured.

Adam protested: 'He never seems to me to hide anything.'

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'I would not say he hides anything,' the musician declared; 'to say that he hides anything would be to imply that he has something to hide. Rather would I say of Mr Macarthy that he has so much to show that it can never all be seen.' Smiling at his own phrase, he concluded: 'Mr Macarthy is not the man to open his mind as if it were an exhibition. He keeps his treasures to himself, like the old-fashioned gentleman that he is at heart.'

Adam clung to this phrase. 'He is old-fashioned, isn't he?' he said, adding confusedly: 'Not the sort of person a girl would fall in love with.'

Herr Behre knit his brows. 'What is that, now?' said he. 'Has someone fallen in love with Mr Macarthy?'

'No, no,' said Adam hastily, 'I was only thinking that he was not the sort of person that a girl, not a young girl, would fall in love with. . . . You don't think he is, do you?'

Herr Behre's brows lightened and he laughed. 'Why ask that of me?' he protested. 'Why not ask your friend, Miss Barbara?'

A fresh twinge of jealousy caught Adam so sharply that he rapped out: 'I never thought of her.'

The musician looked at him: 'But you thought of someone, eh?' he cried rallying: 'you thought of someone?' He checked himself to add with unnatural gravity: 'You are too young to think of such things at all,' and did not encourage him further to pursue the subject.

Alone at dinner with Mr Macarthy Adam told again of his encounter with Old Comet. Mr Macarthy took the business more as a matter of course than he had expected. He refused to blame Father Ignatius for suffering a police spy to come to confession to him 'Old Comet's is a dirty job,' said he, 'but your description of him gives one the hope that he may possibly be ashamed of it.'

'If he is ashamed of it,' Adam returned, 'why does he go on doing it?'

Mr Macarthy said: 'I am glad to gather from what you say that you never do anything of which you are ashamed. . . .'

'I won't say that, Adam hastily put in.

'If you do things of which you are ashamed,' Mr Macarthy returned, 'why do you go on doing them?'

'I suppose,' Adam said thoughtfully, 'it's because I find it hard to leave off.'

'Well,' said Mr Macarthy, 'you may take it from me that Old Comet, as they call him, finds it uncommonly hard to leave off being a police spy. It must be one of the most difficult of all trades to drop.'

'But,' Adam protested, 'isn't Old Comet a traitor to his country?'

'Yes,' said Mr Macarthy, 'and so am I, only I don't make any money out of it.' Having delivered this surprising statement, he made a still more startling one. 'I do make money by a worse betrayal than that of my country.'

'You!' exclaimed Adam, much perturbed, for his guardian denounced himself with the bitterness of an apostle denouncing Judas.

'Yes,' said Mr Macarthy, 'my chief source of income is derived from debauching the public intellect.'

'How?' asked Adam, all agape.

'Some day, perhaps, I may tell you, as a solemn warning,' Mr Macarthy said, 'but this is not the time for a painful confession which you are, perhaps, still too young to be advantaged by.'

The world seemed to Adam to be in the melting-pot that afternoon and evening and night; for he dreamed that night that he was drifting over the falls of a river that fell nowhere. His mind rang three changes so rapidly that they blurred together in their recurrence. How could Old Comet be forgiven for his sins: what was the secret of Mr Macarthy's shame: and did

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Caroline Brady love him, or somebody else, or everybody, or no one at all—was she just humbugging? . . . If she was not humbugging, what was going to happen on Monday? He dreamed of many different happenings on Monday, and awoke restless on the Sunday morning.

Restless he remained all day. Mr Macarthy would be away until Monday evening, so the last chance of opening his mind to anyone was gone. Despite a temptation not to do so, he went as usual to Long Mass and heard Father Steele give one of his best discourses in which, touching on the raising of the rival Orange and Green armies, he pleaded for peace between man and man, between Irishman and Irishman. Adam was touched but no more . . . he felt there could be no peace between him and that which Old Comet served.

After playing with his early dinner, eaten alone at St George's Place, he took up the Byron-Quinn poems and read the last sonnet again, feeling to-day that he understood the sentiment that inspired it. . . . To bring a child into this world was a terrible thing, and he did not wonder at the baronet's apology for it. He made up his mind that he would never do the like of that: when you were alive it was not easy to make up your mind to wish to be dead, but it saved a lot of trouble and bitterness not to be born. . . . He didn't complain of his own life, far from it, but he would have done so had he not been rescued from the slums in some unaccountable fashion, the wherefor of which, never clear to him, he was fast forgetting. His attitude towards Mr Macarthy was virtually that of a son except that there was a familiarity between them not common in Ireland, if anywhere, between parents and children. . . . And yet he had said nothing to Mr Macarthy about Caroline Brady. . . . He wondered if Mr O'Meagher had said anything. . . . Perhaps nothing had come into his

mind to say; after all, why should not Adam bring a lady friend to tea at College Street? . . . But if Caroline Brady and he were married, might they not bring children into the world? . . . If men loved women, commonly they had children by them. . . . That was something he would have to discuss with Caroline, though he did not think he knew her well enough to broach the subject yet. They could not get married for years to come, they could only talk about it. It struck him suddenly that it was a very pleasant thing to talk about, and everyone agreed there was no harm in it when it was quite settled you were going to be married. . . . It was a little hard to realise that he was going to be married to Caroline Brady: he was not sure that she realised it. . . . Perhaps she had thought of marrying one of these soldiers; he remembered hearing his mother say that she had once thought of marrying two soldiers. . . . No, one was a policeman, he remembered his name, Sergeant Barlow.

He did not like the idea of Caroline's affections roving so far as his mother's; he shuddered to think that his mother must after all have been very little, if at all, better than she ought to be. Fortunately, Caroline Brady bore no resemblance, that he could trace, to his mother; he thought it quite bad enough that she should resemble her own. . . . It was queer, this resemblance between parents and children, though perhaps not so queer as a likeness between those who did not stand in any relationship to one another. For instance, that people should think him like Mr O'Toole, while he himself found Mr O'Toole resembled the late Sir David Byron-Quinn. . . . A queer feeling came over him: had not the Marchesa once said to him: 'I know now who you remind me of.' . . . Could she have meant Sir David Byron-Quinn?

An impulse seized him; he looked at the clock and then sat down and wrote these words very clearly on a small sheet of paper: 'If it's me you mean, that's

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all right.' Then, folding this paper he thrust it in his waistcoat pocket and left the house. At the corner of Frederick Street he took the tram to Merrion Square and entered the National Gallery as it was opening for the afternoon. The first visitor, he hastened to the room where hung the portrait of Sir David Byron-Quinn: to find himself alone with it. He thought the eyes welcomed him as he approached. And he thought they thanked him as he departed. The custodian at the door knew him by appearance as a friend of Mr Macarthy's, and perhaps did not wonder at his abrupt coming and going: certainly he never thought to look for the tiny rent in the backing of the canvas that was to carry to posterity the face and figure of David Byron-Quinn as seen by a once passionate mistress, through which Adam had slipped his piece of paper.

There was something electric in the air that summer afternoon. Adam stood a little while outside the gallery watching the sun light and mottle the great spaces of Merrion Square. He wished he had his bicycle that he might flee to the country, but that bullock in the Circular Road had ended his bicycling days for a long time to come. It came into his mind that first great ride of his when he had climbed the Hills and looked down on Dublin from beneath the thorn-tree at Killakee. He visualised that scene again and felt an imperative need to revisit it. He looked at his wrist-watch: after all, the thing was not impossible; at all events he was of a mind to try to do it, so stepping out he turned into Stephen's Green and taking the Terenure tram to its journey's end, he changed there and went on to Rathfarnham. It was hot as he strode through the village and hotter still when, leaving Ballyboden behind, he pushed on up the hill. Long before he reached Killakee he felt a deadly languor and wished he had not embarked on

this adventure, particularly as the country roads were crowded with holiday folk, and char-a-bancs passed him stifling him with dust. Higher up, however, past Air Park, there were few vehicles. Still higher up he believed himself to be momentarily out of sight even of foot passengers, when brazen music swelled rhythmically upon his hearing, and presently he met some hundreds of men, not soldiers, yet marching with perfect discipline behind a brass band. The face of one young man was familiar to him, though he gave no sign of recognition. . . . The music had passed away before Adam realised that it must have been Patsy Doyle, who once sold papers with him outside the Gresham Hotel and had helped him that night of the trouble with Old Comet. Something told Adam that those young men with whom Patsy marched could not be friendly to such old men as Old Comet. . . . Yet he was too weary with walking to think much about it.

He had a notion of getting himself some tea at the Inn that called itself after the Hell Fire Club, but, finding many cars and motors outside it, decided that it might be beyond his means, and, passing it by, turned into the meadow where the thorn-tree was, and under the thorn-tree lay down. Forgetting even to glance at the prospect he had once admired, he fell asleep. . . . Once he was wakened by some animal smelling at his hand, and he looked up to find himself gazing into the eyes of a horse, but his cry of surprise sent it wheeling about to gallop away, and, though vaguely conscious that the sun was no longer to be seen, he went off to sleep again.

When wakened again by he knew not what, it was pitch dark, and he could see nothing, but he knew that something alive was very near to him. All that he could see were the lights out at sea and their glimmer on the water of Dublin Bay, but he knew there was more than one live thing near him, and, little as

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he could hear, he knew them to be male and female. That knowledge kept him very still until they rose and moved away. . . . Then he too rose and followed them; silently they clambered up towards the stile to the roadway, shuffling through brake and slipping over moss, and silently he followed them. When he reached the fence by the road he could hear their feet pattering at a brisk pace away from him towards Dublin. Keeping the same pace, he followed them: they were vaguely visible now, a black patch like the shadow of Siamese twins on the white road. So for the hour and more down to Rathfarnham he followed them at an even pace. The lights of Ballyboden village gave him a more definite glimpse of them, and he thought he had seen both before; particularly he thought he had seen the male, and he stepped out, trying to draw nearer. But, as though they suspected an eavesdropper, they too stepped out, and, tired as he was, gained on him. They reached the terminus at Rathfarnham a greater distance ahead of him than at Killakee: he could just see that they were both pressing into an overcrowded tram, when the conductor put his arm between them, and the tram growled off with the female upon it and the male shaking his fist in fantastic silhouette against the flashing electric light.

He disappeared in the crowd that surged round to storm the next tram, which rapidly filled, and Adam, pressing his pace to the double, dodged on to it just in time to get the last seat outside. He did so at the cost of treading on his neighbour's toe, who snapped out: 'You bloody young muff! Why don't you look where you're going?' Adam, who was not quarrelsome, found himself apologising to the male he had pursued from the field at Killakee, recognisable now as the youth who had forced him to ride his bicycle.

Chapter Thirty-Two

THE PASSAGE OF THE RUBICON

THE Monday morning broke exquisitely fair, and Adam, rising early from a sleepless couch, donned a spot-new suit of white flannel which his guardian had ordered to his measure from Kennedy and Mac-Sharry's: and, although Adam did not flatter himself that he was a beautiful youth, he was confident that he looked comelier in this suit than in any other. And so, although towards midday the sky filled with clouds and it lightened and thundered a full hour, and poured in torrents for nearly three, he could not make up his mind to change; but left St George's Church behind him in a smoking drizzle of rain that soon took the novelty out of his garments and some of the black out of the ribbon on his straw hat—for Mr Macarthy had checked his desire to have one similar to Mr O'Toole's.

By the time he reached the corner of Spring Avenue he looked something between a drowned rat and Cupid masquerading as a river-god: but the sun burst from the clouds to show him his Caroline emerge from her dread fastness fairly in time for her tryst with him. She was radiant, with her own dark charm set off by a pink summer dress and hat and parasol, all new as his own and unspoiled by rain. Yet was it disappointing to hear her greeting: 'Oh, my dear! Did you fall down a drain?'

Adam answered sulkily: 'You said I was to come, wet or fine.'

Amiably she protested: 'But why ever didn't you bring an umbrella?'

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'Umbrella!' Adam snorted; 'I never had an umbrella.'

To which she, of course, said: 'Why didn't you borrow Mr Macarthy's?'

Adam pooh-poohed: 'He never had such a thing no more than me.'

It was unwise of him to take that attitude with Caroline, who said: 'I noticed he never wore an overcoat. . . . I suppose you're trying to be like him?'

The corners of Adam's mouth lowered sulkily. 'I wouldn't mind being like him when I come to his age.'

'You'll never come to his age,' she retorted, 'if you go on like this. You'd better be off home to change.'

Adam looked her full in the face. 'What did you say on Saturday night?' said he.

'I was only talking,' she answered: 'just a bit of fun.' She drew her right arm through his. 'Don't be cross with me; come on.'

They walked quite a long way in perfect silence, and the exercise and the strong sun glare warmed Adam's feet and dried the surface of his flannel suit.

'You look lovely in your new clothes,' she volunteered at last, and sent Adam's heart heaven-high, to fall again as she added: 'I dare say Macarthy looked like you when he was a child.'

'I don't see that I'm at all like Mr Macarthy,' he returned; 'I've hardly ever heard anyone say that before, and I don't see why you say it.'

'Why wouldn't I?' she expostulated, but with an air of indifference. 'Haven't you the same sort of eyes?'

Adam admitted: 'They may be the same colour.'

Miss Brady shook her head. 'It isn't that, for yours are a strong, lovely blue, and his are faded and going grey. It's the expression in them. Most fellows

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with blue eyes look at you as if they'd like to humbug you if they could. But your eyes, and much more Macarthy's, look as if they could humbug you if they wanted to, but wouldn't do it for all the world.'

'Certainly,' said Adam, after pause for reflection; 'Mr Macarthy's no humbug.'

'And are you?' she asked.

'No,' said Adam. 'I won't say I feel so strongly about it as he does. For I've lived a harder life, maybe, that I couldn't have lived at all without some humbug. It was meat and drink to me when I first remember.'

'Do you mean you were very poor?' Miss Brady queried.

'Starving,' he answered in a word.

'Lor!' said Miss Brady. 'I never remember our being so poor as not to be respectable.' She enlarged on this theme. 'My mother was always a wonderful manager, and when things were at their worst she could always poke out another few shillings somewhere. . . . You wouldn't think, to look at her now, what Ma could do a few years ago, before her hair and complexion went. . . . Having so many children, you know. . . . Then she was nearly as gay as me, in a heavier sort of way, mind you. Now she sits at home all day and grizzles. She and Pa make me quite ill between them. But he was never any use except for being quick at figures when he was young. Now he's got some sort of brain . . . leisure, do they call it?'

Adam suggested lesion.

'Whatever you say yourself,' she smirked. 'Don't let's talk about Pa. It makes me sick to think of him. . . . If I was in that state I'd make a hole in the water.'

'Don't talk like that,' said Adam pressing closer to her. 'Life can be just lovely.'

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'Life's just lovely for you and me to-day,' she said, 'because we're young and healthy and out for a bit of fun. . . . Don't pinch me so, and I won't call it a bit of fun if you don't like, but that's what it is all the same you know. And I wouldn't have come if you were going to be too serious about it.'

'I wouldn't have come,' said Adam, 'if I'd thought you couldn't be serious about it.' He stopped short with an air of going no farther and found they had wandered, how he knew not, so far as the canal bridge on the Drumcondra Road. It was a difficult place to talk, with people passing, and tram-cars grinding and groaning as they stopped and went on again. Yet there they stood showing to each other their inmost souls.

Miss Brady swung her little bag. 'Serious, of course, but not too serious. You can't expect a young lady of my age to be so serious as all that about a boy of fourteen or fifteen.'

'I'm not so far from sixteen,' said Adam.

'What's sixteen?' she returned. 'You talk as if it were twenty-one.'

'Would you marry me if I was twenty-one?' he asked eagerly.

She retorted: 'I wouldn't marry you if you were a hundred. . . . Not if you asked me a hundred times a day.'

Adam cried out against this cruel wrong. 'Why not?'

She shook her bag and her head in unison slowly and mysteriously, almost as if it were a ritual, and was a long time saying: 'I wouldn't marry any man except the one.'

And Adam, bringing the movement of his stick subconsciously into rhythm with the movement of her bag, was even slower in asking: 'Do I know his name?'

She stopped wagging her head to nod and then

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pretended to be interested in a paper bag afloat in the canal.

Adam struck the ground with his bamboo cane. 'But you've never had anything to say or do with him,' he pointed out as if he suspected her of being unaware of it.

She only answered: 'Perhaps that's why I fancy him so. . . . If once I had a bit of fun. . . .'

Adam groaned to hear it come out at last.

But Miss Brady was too lost in her own thoughts to hear the groan. She said: 'It's a queer thing now, but I can't even imagine that.'

Adam's groan became articulate. 'No more can I.'

'Of course you can't,' she laughed, 'how could you?'

'I wouldn't if I could,' said he, compressing his lips and eyeing her wistfully.

'You look very like Macarthy now,' she said, and perplexed him; for he could not conceive that his guardian had ever known the emotion filling him then. She went on: 'Would you marry me if you could?'

Snapping at the chance he cried eagerly: 'Upon my honour I would.'

'Hush!' she insisted, dropping her hand on his mouth. 'What will people think we're talking about?'

'What does it matter,' Adam blurted, 'it's nothing to be ashamed of.'

Her hand still shadowing his mouth she answered in her softer tone: 'But it's silly to talk of on a stony old bridge with trams and cars buzzing by all the time and people nudging you out of their way.' She looked round as though forgetful where exactly they were. 'Let's turn down on the canal bank past Mountjoy Prison, and if you're good we'll maybe go farther still.'

Adam said something about going to the Styx edge, which allusion Miss Brady did not follow. Meanwhile he found himself with her by the canal side; on the

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bank away from the prison, with the railway running below them on their right. They walked silently a little way until she touched again, to his surprised delight, on the topic nearest his heart. 'If I was willing to marry you and you were old enough, which you never will be . . .'

'Why not?' he broke in.

She pressed his right wrist with her left hand and the handle of the little bag hurt, but he pretended to enjoy it. 'Never mind. Listen to me: even if we could get married and we both wanted to . . . which I don't . . .'

'Why not?' he asked again.

'Will you be quiet,' she cried, 'and listen to me.'

'I'm listening like mad,' he asserted sulkily.

'Well, suppose everything was arranged and I'd got my trousseau and everything . . .'

'What's a trousseau?' Adam asked.

She stopped and stamped her foot. 'There you go interrupting again, and what a little silly you are not to know what a trousseau is. I'll show you some day.' Then, looking in Adam's eyes and finding the suggestion wakened no light in them, she added: 'In Walpole's window . . . I wish you wouldn't interrupt: I've forgotten what I was going to say.'

'About being married to me,' said Adam trustingly.

Once again to be crushed; for she answered: 'No, it wasn't. It was about not being married to you.'

'Caroline,' whispered Adam piteously as she seemed to turn away from him. 'You're tormenting me. . . . I can't stand it. . . . I'll throw myself into the canal.'

'Why not the railway?' she said tauntingly, so that he made a blind rush towards it and would have leaped the low wall had she not caught him, saying even then mockingly: 'What's the use. . . . You'd only break your leg and maybe starve to death before a train came. . . . What are you crying for?'

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'You,' sobbed Adam through a veil of tears.

The arm that restrained took a softer fold around him so that it wellnigh melted into an embrace: 'Don't cry,' she whispered, 'remember we're out for a bit of fun.'

'What's fun to you is death to me, as the frog said to the boy,' he stuttered half laughing, with the back of his hand to one eye and his rain-crumpled handkerchief to his nose.

'It's not only frogs might say that to a boy,' she declared, 'but it's the first I've heard of a boy saying it to a girl.'

'But you've been teasing me ever since we started out,' he protested.

'What do you want me to be doing with you?' she asked point blank. 'If I knew what you wanted I might oblige.' Her mouth opened in a deliciously merry laugh: 'I'll take my oath you don't know yourself.'

Infected by her mirth, he laughed loudly too, and cried hysterically: 'I want to be married to you.'

'And I tell you you can't be married to me,' she returned; 'for, even if you could, Macarthy wouldn't let you.'

'How would he prevent me?' asked Adam, a shade doubtfully.

'He'd say I was an impudent baggage,' she answered, looking hard at him.

Adam met firmly her gaze as he declared: 'Mr Macarthy'd never do the like of that. He'd never call a woman names.'

Miss Brady's face was wreathed with smiles: 'The darling man!' she ejaculated. 'The oftener you name him the more I love him. . . . And I love you because I can talk to you about him. . . . And I love you because you love him. . . . And I love you because he loves you. . . . And I love you because you're more than a little like him about the eyes. . . . And I love

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you because you're reminding me of him the whole time we spend together.'

Her litany was bitter-sweet as a dream. 'But,' he answered, 'being loved like that is not like being loved for myself.'

'Oh, yes it is,' she insisted, 'very like it. . . . We never love people for themselves, but only for the things we imagine about them.' She jumped from the philosophical abstract to the practical concrete, and took his hand, leading him on away from the railway wall. 'I'll tell you what we'll do to-day for a bit of fun. . . . What was the name of the old fellow's daughter?'

With an unaccountable reluctance, Adam named Josephine O'Meagher.

'Josephine O'Meagher,' she repeated: 'I was telling you what we'd do to-day for a bit of fun, wasn't I?'

'You were,' said Adam faintly.

She went on. 'I'll pretend to be your friend Josephine O'Meagher and you pretend to be Macarthy.' She amended her proposition. 'I mean to say, that I'll pretend that you're Macarthy, and you can let on, if you like, that I'm your friend the nun, or whatever she is. . . . Mind you, you'll have to pretend hard if she's a nun, for I'm not feeling like one to-day.'

'I'd rather not pretend anything of the kind,' he murmured.

'All right, then,' Miss Brady answered with cool firmness, 'we'd better go home.'

Adam, as usual, surrendered. 'I'll pretend anything rather than go home.'

'Very well, then,' she said: 'you can let on I'm anyone you like, but I'm going to try my best to pretend that you're Macarthy, so mind now, don't spoil it'

'But what am I to do?' he asked pitifully

She actually sighed. 'Not much . . . I suppose

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you needn't do anything except pretend not to like me.'

Adam's face betrayed more bewilderment than he perhaps really felt. 'How can I pretend that you're someone I love and someone I don't like at the same time?'

Miss Brady scoffed at him with roguish contempt. 'And you educated by the Jesuits! I am surprised at you.' She broke off to dance a step or two gleefully. 'We'll have no end of fun.' She swung him round by an arm encircling his waist, that left its rosy imprint on the damp white flannel. 'Come along, Macarthy, there's a love.'

She took his hand, and so they wandered on side by side, very close together, to the end of that stretch of the canal and along the tow-path under Westmoreland Bridge that carries the hearses on the road to Glasnevin, and on past the smelly flour mills to where, after a last burst of railway track and slag heaps, the canal begins to leave the town behind and pursue its straight way to the west. To the west, whither, in its distant and palmier days, it floated handsome embarkations bearing King's officers, with their genteel families, safer and more comfortably, if a trifle slower, than any road coach, to the fortress town of Athlone.

Adam, on whom the freedom of Mr Macarthy's library had not been utterly wasted, thought of these ghostly barques that had once made proud those now dreary waters, dismal now as the tumbledown grand houses in which those King's officers and their kind had lodged and married and given in marriage. Lord Queenstown wanted those days back again: Mr Macarthy laughed at him. Others, like the Marchesa (herself so like one of those tumble-down houses), wanted to return to ill-defined days dating from the times ere brick was used to build a wall in Dublin city. Mr Macarthy laughed equally, if more gently, at her. Mr Macarthy regarded all trifling with the clock as

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folly, and held that the most wilful could tread no measure that was not Time's. Of these things Adam thought as he wandered on and on by Caroline's side between the railway and the canal. . . . And then he wondered of what was Caroline thinking: could she really be thinking of him as Mr Macarthy, while they walked along so silently, so steadily together, as if there were no question that they should ever come back?

Suddenly these words from her lips fell upon his ear: 'Are you happy?'

'I am always happy with you,' he answered: not that it was true, but he wished to please her.

'Macarthy would never say a humbugging thing like that,' she answered vexedly: 'you'd better say nothing even when I speak to you . . . Or else you'll spoil everything even now.'

Adam did not see what there was to spoil, but he conveyed in dumb show his desire to kill no joy.

She paused, and they stood a moment arm in arm, close together, looking around them. All was hushed except that the wind, which had shifted from the south-west of the morning to due east, and rippled the canal water, brought them the chime of the city clocks striking five. Adam thought he could distinguish the peal of St George's above the others: he would know St George's bells anywhere, if that church were transported to the ends of the earth or whisked by a magician, like Aladdin's palace, to Africa. He could still see the steeple from where they stood now, on a part of the canal bank, deserted at this hour of a holiday by all the world, but interesting as of old to him; for here the railway line bifurcated, and one branch swooped down beneath the other and beneath the canal, to lose itself in the distance in the bowels of the Phoenix Park, under the road where he recalled that strange adventure of his with the lady and the soldiers, and reappeared ultimately leaping the river Liffey

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at Kingsbridge: and on the other side of the canal approached the Midland Great Western line from Broadstone, which the line on their side jumped the canal to join and be merged in as it sped on its way to Athlone, and the ultimate Connacht, from which Mr O'Meagher supposed Caroline's ancestors to have come on their triumphant march to that blind alley called Spring Avenue.

In the sector of a circle between the canal and the converging railway line, they stood on a squelching hillock of wet turf bathed in sunlight, and partly hidden from passers-by by a breastwork of moss-grown slag. It was, normally, so quiet a spot that Adam had seen men bathe there naked without let or hindrance, and other sights which proclaimed it an established sanctuary. Miss Brady looked round, north and south and east and west she gazed, then, when he was wondering what she would say or do, she seemed to catch sight of something through the arch of the railway bridge across the canal.

Silently she moved forward again, taking him as it were captive with her; under the arch they passed until they commanded the prospect on the other side. There was not a soul in sight, nor anything stirring but the smoke of a locomotive creeping puffily towards them from the western horizon: even when the clocks had stilled and the east wind fallen, you could barely hear the sound of it. Adam looked up at Miss Brady as she again stood still. 'What are you thinking of?' he asked. For answer she put her finger to her lips and then her lips on his, and then led him, all trembling, back to the squelching hillock.

Full of the most romantic and indescribable emotion, Adam was cut like a whip by her next words: 'Now, Macarthy, you've got to do what I tell you. Lie down.'

Adam protested. 'You talk to me as if I were a dog.'

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Miss Brady's eyes flashed disapproval. 'I knew you'd spoil everything by answering me back! Will you lie down or won't you?'

'The grass is ringing wet,' he objected.

'If you're afraid of rheumatism at your age,' said Miss Brady, 'I'm going home to my tea.'

'I'm thinking of you as much as myself,' he honestly claimed.

'I'm afraid of nothing,' said Miss Brady, and plumped down on the hillock. 'Here's a bit of my petticoat for you to sit on.'

Adam could not refuse this invitation. The earth on which they lay gave off a warm vernal odour, like scent in the atmosphere of a Turkish bath.

'Are you happy now?' asked Caroline, supporting his head on her arm.

He answered, with his eyes in hers: 'I mightn't be if I were Macarthy.'

'Then be yourself,' she whispered, and put her other arm around him.

He was lost now in a sort of ecstasy, blinded by her face and arms and hair. Yet his ear told of the train in the distance, audible now, and creeping nearer and nearer out of the west from which Caroline's forbears were sprung, until it was over the canal, over the spot where they had kissed, and thundering by them, and slowly, slowly away, puffing and groaning slowly, slowly, down the line by the canal, under the bridge that carried the hearses to Glasnevin, past the spot where he had offered to kill himself to-day, past Newcomen Bridge, where he had overtaken Caroline the day he chased her from Pleasant Street: into Amiens Street, which had bounded his horizon when he was young, out of it again over Beresford Place, past Liberty Hall and the Custom House and the Bristol boat and the waters that drowned Fan Tweedy, to Westland Row: past St Andrew's Church and out round the Bay by Sandycove, where had sped the

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happiest moments of his life, through Dalkey tunnel, where he first felt the flame that was consuming him now, and on to Bray, where she who had given him the greatest happiness of his life had chosen to pass her own life as a cloistered nun. . . . He was recalled to the fleeting Now by Caroline's voice, gently reproachful.

She was whispering: 'Adam, you little dreamer! Tell me your dream.'

He blushed as she released him to look in his face, yet he answered glibly: 'I was thinking of what the Playboy says to Pegeen Mike: "Let you wait, to hear me talking, till we're astray in Erris, when Good Friday's by, drinking a sup from a well, and making mighty kisses with our wetted mouths, or gaming in a gap of sunshine, with yourself stretched back onto your necklace, in the flowers of the earth."' "

She looked at him with a puzzled air. 'What's all that nonsense you're saying?'

Despite the glow that came from her to him, Adam was shocked at her ignorance. 'You've seen Synge's "Playboy of the Western World" at the Abbey Theatre? . . . Caroline, you must have!'

She answered scornfully: 'As if I'd go to a dirty hole like that. . . . But I can tell you that this time yesterday I was hearing a fellow read me bits of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis."' "

On the instant Adam's soul rose in jealous rage, and he felt his fingers turn into claws. 'Tell me the fellow's name,' he cried.

But she only answered as hotly, though with another heat than his: 'Never you mind. That was only a bit of fun. . . . Let's pretend this is something different,' and she bit his lip and crushed him to her: and he felt all fury and strength and sense of time and place, of past and present, go out from him within the magic circle of her thin limbs. She and he were no longer Adam and Caroline, nor boy and girl. They

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were one idea, plunged in the immemorial seas of creation, sinking or swimming, he knew not which. . . . Knew nothing but that reality was less real than the least real of his dreams.

Then he was conscious of rain falling, faster and faster, upon the back of his neck : and he let it so fall for a while till at last it streamed off him on to her, and she said : 'Adam . . . It's raining. . . . Are you asleep?'

Chapter Thirty-Three

ON THE FURTHER SHORE

THE Bank Holiday ended, as it had threatened, in storm and rain. Its full violence broke upon Adam and Caroline as they left the canal at Drumcondra Bridge and turned into the Circular Road. She begged him to go straight home, but with the valiancy of young blood and a vibrant sense of voyaging in a new world that was not, after all, a dream, he brought her through the sheets of rain to her very door, and, holding open the creaking gate, bade her farewell. The rain ran off her parasol to join the rivers coursing down his neck as she murmured: 'It wasn't just fun, Adam; was it, dear?'

Taken aback by her wistful tone and an odd expression on her no longer merry face, he could only for answer kiss very humbly her hand: and, pressing his gratefully, she whispered in his ear: 'Adam, my little true love, it wasn't fun for me. . . . I was mad for once. . . . I've never done such a thing before.' She added fervently: 'I hope to God you've taken no harm by it. Run home as fast as you can and get out of your wet things.'

'You're wetter than I am,' he chattered.

'Never mind that now,' she insisted. 'Nothing matters to me but you; come and see me again as soon as you can, if it's only to tell me I've done you no harm.'

He kissed her wet hand again, noticing, as it seemed to him, that she shuddered as the gate creaked between them, and, as he turned away, that she fumbled

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awkwardly with her latchkey letting herself in. He noticed, too, that the dye of her pink frock had transferred itself in great measure to his once white flannels. But he rather gloried in this as he doubled out of Spring Avenue into the Circular Road, facing defiantly the torrent of rain and splashing ankle-deep through pools; for was not this wearing of Caroline's colours a mystic symbol of their first exchange of love? Not even his omniscient guardian could possibly guess the meaning of these rosy stains: and not to him, nor anyone till judgment day, would Adam divulge this secret that fired him as he sped, like Puck, through the mire of the Dublin streets. . . . Only he wished that the last sound he carried from Spring Avenue had been a word from her loving mouth and not the creaking of that rotten gate and the thud of that sepulchral door.

In Fitzgibbon Street he was checked by the arms of someone as unprotected from the tempest as himself. 'I was coming to look for you,' said his guardian. 'What a state you're in.'

Adam stuttered with surprise: 'I didn't know you'd be back already. . . .' He braced himself to evade an answer to the question where he had been, but his guardian asked none.

Mr Macarthy only said: 'Let's run,' and, with an arm round him, rushed him up the hill and up the steps of the house and up the stairs to the bathroom, where he found himself in less than no time up to his neck in steaming water.

That night he slept, for the first time at Mountjoy Square, in his guardian's own bed: Mr Macarthy resting on a folding chair in the sitting-room, with the door open; for he found the boy had developed a cough and a temperature. For the moment Adam was glad of this, deeming that it saved him from an almost inevitable inquisition. But in the morning the temperature was still above normal, and Dr Ahern

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came to pronounce it an attack of pleurisy. So Adam spent a week in his guardian's bed and his guardian a week out of any.

Since the great adventure which introduced him to the luxuries of the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, and indirectly to the love of Caroline Brady, Adam had associated the idea of illness with that of pleasure: and but for the barrier which it set up between Caroline and him, he would have revelled in his present one. But not all the comfort lavished on him by his guardian could disguise from him that it was unchivalrous of him (to use a word he had come to like) to lie there in bed and leave her without a token that her kisses had not been thrown away on him. He was particularly anxious when the Saturday came and went without his being allowed to leave his bed, so that he might look out of the window to see if she passed, much less walk over to Hollander's in Grafton Street to watch her coming out.

All that Saturday he lay thinking of her, and, as the bells of St George's Church struck five, he saw her sparkling eyes alight in a little trim figure that sprang through the hole in the roller blind to look eagerly around for him (as eagerly as he had once looked round for her), and, still searching eagerly, her little purse no longer swinging on her arm, lest its bravado should attract another squire, pass down Grafton Street, past Hodges and Figgis and the music shop and the house-agents where Bernard Shaw was once a clerk, and Ponsonby's, and the tobacconist's, and the tourist agency, to take the tram at College Green. And so he fancied her progress as far as Findlater's Church, maybe, though that was out of her road, and she would do better to change at the Parnell statue for the tram to Summer Hill. But, for his sake, he imagined that she might at this very moment, twenty past five, be walking up Gardiner's Row, and Denmark Street, past Belvedere (hating it for his sake), and through

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Gardiner's Place, and stopping at the corner of Gardiner Street, undecided whether to pass the house on the north side or, in memory of the night they had walked it together, go round by west and south to Great Charles Street. He decided that her practical temperament would lead her to walk past the house, on the other side of the road, so that she could look up at the window. . . . A pang of jealousy shot through him : had she not confessed to looking up at the window in the past in the hope of seeing Mr Macarthy?

His reverie was broken into by the sound of voices in the sitting-room : his guardian's and another, a gentle voice, a woman's voice, a girl's voice, a familiar voice—He drew a breath full at once of hope and despair—was it Caroline? . . . He listened fiercely : no, it was, he confessed unwillingly, too cultured for Caroline : and, though he was not prepared to admit it to be a more charming voice, its cadences did in fact, even at that moment, charm his ear with their cultivated rhythm. And he could not hide from himself that it was with joy he saw the doorway brightened suddenly by the winning figure of Babs Burns, with her brilliant colouring, not so very unlike Caroline as she might be if magically transformed into a princess.

'Well, Adam,' said Barbara, 'we've all been wondering what had become of you.'

'I don't believe it,' said Adam, brusquely modest.

'Well, not perhaps everyone,' Babs admitted; 'but mother asked me this morning why neither you nor Mr Macarthy had been near us for so long. So I offered to come over and find out.'

'And the offer,' Adam heard his guardian say in his quiet voice in the next room, 'was enthusiastically received.' He came into the room. 'And so was the visit, by all concerned.' He appealed to Adam : 'There is no one in the world you could be better pleased to see than Miss Burns, is there, old man?'

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And, though it smote his conscience, Adam could not bring himself to say there was; for he was at once too fluttered and too flattered by this exquisite being's presence beside his bed to think clearly of anything else. He beamed on Babs Burns, and he thought Miss Burns looked back more than kindly at him. . . . It pleased him to think that he was wearing his guardian's most beautiful pyjamas. . . . His guardian's glance travelled paternally from the one to the other: 'I will leave you two young people alone,' he said. And, having placed Miss Burns in a chair by the bed, went out and shut the door behind him.

Adam and Babs regarded each other for a while in silence, as two young animals for the first time in one cage. He was relieved when she at last broke the silence: 'I love lying in bed, don't you?'

'Sometimes,' said Adam.

'I love it always,' Miss Burns declared, 'unless there's something on that I want to do.'

'What sort of a thing?' Adam asked.

Her reply was a little vague. 'Oh, anything. Acting, or concerts, or hunting, for instance.'

'Do you hunt?' The query had a subconscious note of disapproval.

'No,' said she, 'not really. How could I? My mother used to, but that was when she was well off, before she married. . . . Not really well off, you know, but better off than we are. We're always stoney-broke. . . . I have ridden to hounds twice on a pony in Meath, and I would hunt if I got the chance. . . . I love horses; don't you?'

'I think I prefer motors,' said Adam.

'How absurd,' Miss Burns said roundly. 'You can't prefer motors to horses any more than you can prefer aeroplanes to angels. . . . You wouldn't prefer an aeroplane to an angel, would you?'

Adam said he thought he might if he believed in angels, but, as he had lately ceased to believe in angels,

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he had really no preference. And Miss Burns retorted that her father did not believe in aeroplanes.

'But he must believe in them,' Adam insisted, 'for there they are, whether he believes in them or not.'

'But all sorts of things are there whether you believe in them or not,' said Miss Burns with a brilliance recalling her mother's.

Adam demanded what there was there in which he refused to believe, and she answered triumphantly: 'Well, for instance, Congregationalism is there, and you don't believe in that, do you?'

Adam, confessing that, so far as he knew anything about it, which was not far, he did not. She continued: 'Of course not; how could you? How could anybody? I don't even know what it means, and neither does mother—though, mind you, she was a Congregationalist for nearly four months before she became a Buddhist. You're not a Buddhist, are you?'

Adam said he was not a Buddhist, and she went on: 'I suppose you're a Roman Catholic? I wouldn't mind being a Roman Catholic. There's a tradition in the family that my grandfather was near being a Catholic at one time. . . . But, then, he did so many things. . . . I like the smell of Roman Catholic churches when they're not too dirty; I can't stand the smell of the Church of Ireland, respectability gone sour. Mr Leaper-Carahar is Church of Ireland. . . . I hate all religions, don't you?'

Adam agreed that, on the whole, he thought he hated most religions he knew anything about: but he sometimes fancied there might be something in Buddhism.

'You can't hunt if you're a Buddhist,' said Miss Burns, 'so what's the good of that?'

'Can't you even hunt tigers?' Adam asked.

'Tigers?' snapped Miss Burns. 'I can't go and hunt the tigers at the Zoo; the poor things couldn't run away if I ran after them.' He noticed that she

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seemed truly sorry at the thought of their being unable to run away.

'But you could go to India,' Adam suggested, 'and hunt them there.'

'And who's going to take me to India?' she exclaimed. 'Will you?'

'I would if I could,' cried Adam eagerly, oblivious of anything but the excited and exciting figure by his bed.

Miss Burns laughed. 'Before you could take me to India I'd be a fat old woman with a lot of children. I love children, don't you?'

So far parentage had taken no shape in Adam's dream romances, and his passion blushed at the thought of keeping company with procreation: few days had passed since it seemed to him almost a sin: yet, suddenly, he heard the words leap across his lips: 'I'd love to have children by you.'

For an instant Barbara blazed scarlet, and her fingers closed his mouth, which kissed and found them the most beautiful fingers it had touched. 'You silly boy,' she whispered fiercely, 'don't talk such nonsense.' She glanced at the door. 'What would he think if he heard you?'

'I'm sorry,' Adam murmured; 'I didn't mean to offend you. It slipped out.'

'You didn't offend me,' she answered: 'it only hurt me to think that you thought . . . That anyone might think . . . Never mind.' She looked at him curiously. 'I thought you were in love with a nun, or something ridiculous, like other boys of your age.'

'Do you think,' said Adam apologetically, 'that you can only be in love with one person?'

'No, I don't,' said Miss Burns. 'But what has that got to do with it? I'm not in love with anybody, and I don't mean to be. . . . And if I were, nothing would induce me to let the person I loved ever have the smallest suspicion of it.'

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'Not if you were married to them!' Adam gasped.

'Oh, you never marry the person you love,' said Miss Burns with slightly husky bravado. 'That's all a fairy-tale.' She got up and moved about the room. 'Let's talk of something else.' Standing before the fireplace, she read the 'What Rot!' programme with a frown, and snapped out: 'Belinda Bellingham! What rot indeed!' Then, coming back to the bed: 'That reminds me, why didn't you come to the Abbey on Thursday night—oh, I forgot: you were ill.'

'What happened at the Abbey on Thursday night?' he asked listlessly; 'I thought the company was over in England?'

'The ordinary actors are,' said Miss Burns, 'but didn't you know there was a special performance of Mr Tinkler's new play?'

Adam shook his head. 'Mr Macarthy said nothing about it.'

'Mr Macarthy thinks Mr Tinkler a silly ass,' said Miss Burns, 'and, of course, he is, but I don't see that's any reason why Mr Macarthy mightn't have come to see me act.'

Adam commenced to be interested. 'I didn't know you acted.'

'I never tried it before,' she pleaded, 'not to speak of, but I've had no end of a jolly notice in the "Express."'

'Mr Macarthy doesn't think much of dramatic criticism,' said Adam, adding, in an effort to tone down in mid-channel the tactlessness of his remark: 'I mean in some of the Dublin papers.'

'Oh, but this notice,' she returned triumphantly, 'was not done by the ordinary critic. It was sent in by Marcus Pim specially.'

'The chap in your father's office?' Adam asked innocently.

Miss Burns frowned. 'I don't see what that has to do with it.' She produced a crumpled piece of newspaper and threw it on the bed. 'There's the notice:

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you can see for yourself. . . .’ Quite in the manner of Caroline, she broke off to stamp her foot: ‘It’s bad enough that Mr Macarthy should laugh, but when it comes to you!’

‘What have I done?’ Adam asked, and as he failed to elicit a reply, for she had turned her back on him to study again the ‘What Rot!’ programme, he perused the critique.

MR TINKLER’S ‘DEIRDRE.’

‘The least that can be said of Mr Arthur Tinkler’s “Deirdre,” produced last night with overwhelming success at the Abbey Theatre, in the well-merited absence of the Abbey Players, is that it is far superior to Mr Yeats’s and the late J. M. Synge’s, and falls little, if at all, short of Canon Smithson’s version of the same romantic theme. Everyone knows the story of Deirdre, which is to Ireland what Homer was to Troy in the practically prehistoric age when knights were bold. But Mr Tinkler’s play, it is only fair to the Dublin play-going classes and masses to say, is not like “When Knights Were Bold.” It is a superior play, although not, it must be confessed, amusing, but certainly in no way vulgar. If we have any fault to find with Mr Tinkler’s work, it is that his writing is almost too refined. It was difficult to believe that his Naisi could behave in a manner unworthy of an English gentleman, and equally difficult to think of Deirdre herself (impersonated by the Marchesa della Venasalvatica with a golden voice in the many emotional passages recalling Duse or Bernhardt at their best) as a wild Irish girl even of that uncertain age. Mr Tinkler has still to learn the art of portraying Irish character in a manner that will please the more cultivated among what are, it is not too much to say, the most cultivated publics of the world. But his play is always high-toned and has some really interesting

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moments, particularly towards the beginning, while the audience are yet in doubt as to what is the author's purport. This doubt is, moreover, fairly sustained to the end, which was notably well received by a fashionable and apparently interested audience.

'The acting, as it always is at the Abbey, whatever else happens, was simply grand. Besides the overwhelming Deirdre of the Marchesa della Venasalvatica (so well known in Irish society and artistic circles on the Continent and elsewhere, as Lady Daphne Page, second daughter of the late Earl of Derrydown), which it would be a work of supererogation to praise further, Mr Tinkler himself, who, apart from the play under discussion, is an author of world-wide fame in England, and who will shortly publish a new book, not, we believe, his first, would have had an equally tragic effect as the ill-fated Naisi had not a quite uncalled for modesty made his reading of the part inaudible, except, no doubt, to those who were fortunate enough to be upon the stage. If we have criticism to offer Mr Tinkler, it is that he should remember the stage of a theatre is not a drawing-room, even if the scenery is painted so as to deceive the eye into this delusion, which in his play we need not remind Mr Tinkler that it was not, whatever it may have been. Where all the parts were played far better than could under any circumstances be expected, it would be a work of supererogation to single out any one name for special praise; but we may particularise as typical of the general perfection the First Mute of Miss Calvinia Macfie (who, it is an open secret, is said to be the gifted daughter of our learned fellow-citizen, the Solicitor-General), and the Third Eavesdropper of Miss Barbara Burns, the charming heiress of our popular fellow-townpeople, Mr and Mrs Burns, herself the brilliant hostess and amateur piano player, the portrait of whose father, the famous soldier and poetic amateur, Sir D. Byron-Quinn, painted as an interesting

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coincidence by the once Lady Daphne Page, is one of the handsomest ornaments of our national collection. Each of these young ladies was in their own way equally inimitable: Miss Macfie showing unmistakable reserve of a kind for which even her best friends were unprepared, and Miss Burns was no less successful on different lines. We should like to see one day both these ladies in the title rôle, particularly if the Marchesa della Venasalvatica would impart to them some of her own unique tragic beauty of style.'

When Adam came to the end of this dissertation he tried to look as if he were interested, but held his peace.

'Well?' said Miss Burns, when she saw that Adam's eye had reached the end of the story, and was obviously not about to re-read it. 'What about it?'

The door opened, and Mr Macarthy appeared, saying apologetically: 'The long silence troubled me; I feared you had both gone to sleep.'

The last word twinged Adam again, but he was glad of his guardian's return; for he was conscious of a disability to say to Miss Burns the sort of thing which he had a notion she expected. 'Mr Macarthy will be interested to read of your success,' he suggested.

Said Mr Macarthy: 'Not at all.'

Babs stamped her foot again. 'How can you be so horrid? Am I less interesting than other people?'

'Less interesting than some,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but, so far as I am concerned, the only thing of any interest about Mr Tinkler's "Deirdre."'

'I believe you're jealous of Albert Tinkler,' she muttered, and Adam wondered whether both of them were intended to hear.

Mr Macarthy looked at her reproachfully. 'I admit that he is my successful rival,' he said, 'in the affections of Lady Bland.'

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Barbara grimaced half angrily. 'I don't believe he was ever in love with Lady Bland, or you either.'

Mr Macarthy shook his head gravely. 'That will avail you nothing so long as Lady Bland believes it; if you can persuade her of it, he might be released, as they say of the cinematograph films, and then who knows, my dear Barbara, what might happen?'

Barbara burst into a merry laugh. 'I know one thing that would not happen,' said she: 'Mr Tinkler would never ask me to marry him.' Adam knew not whether to be angry or pleased at this suggested remissness of Mr Tinkler.

'No,' said Mr Macarthy, 'to do Tinkler justice, he has too much respect for you to do that.'

Barbara frowned. 'Do you think he would marry Lady Bland if she were free?'

'To do Lady Bland justice,' said Mr Macarthy, 'she has too much respect for herself to do that.'

Miss Burns's eyes filled with puzzlement. 'To do what?'

'To be free to marry Tinkler.'

'What can you mean?' Miss Burns dropped her voice. 'Surely he's better than her husband?'

Mr Macarthy nodded portentously. 'Far better. . . . But Sir Adolphus has the great advantage of being a man, and the hour he dies he will become, in Lady Bland's estimation, an angel. She will entirely forget that he was a drunken bully once that he is no longer there to bully her and get drunk, whereas Tinkler's nothingness will be always before her eyes. It's quite a mistake to suppose that a living jackass has any advantage over a dead hyena: though when both are alive the jackass may seem the less trying company. It is the strong and not the virtuous personality that conquers death. Hundreds of people went into hysterics over Parnell when he was dead who wished to see him hanged when he was alive.' He broke off. 'You probably know that poem, if one

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may stretch a point and call it so, of your grandfather, Byron-Quinn?’

Barbara broke in excitedly: ‘If you mean “The Dead Lover,” I set it to a sort of tune of my own the other day. Would you like me to sing it to you?’

Mr Macarthy shrugged his shoulders: ‘If you remember the words,’ and turned carelessly away.

‘Don’t be horrid,’ Miss Burns pouted: ‘Of course I remember the words . . . At least, I think I remember the last verse,’ and in her deep, moving, almost manly little voice she sang:

‘But though in my grave I lie,
I laugh deliciously
At the foolish living lovers that are dancing over
me. . . .’

So far Adam heard and no further; for, listlessly turning the scrap of paper on which was printed Mr Marcus Pim’s appreciation of Barbara Burns as the Third Eavesdropper in Mr Tinkler’s tragedy of ‘Deirdre,’ he read:

‘BRADY: At 11 Spring Avenue, Summer Hill, on the 7th instant, of a chill contracted on Bank Holiday, Caroline Moira, youngest and only surviving daughter of Alexander Brady, Esq., of the Connacht and Leinster Bank. R.I.P.’

Chapter Thirty-Four

MR MACARTHY ON CAROLINE

ADAM lay very still in bed, clutching that tragi-comic scrap of paper in his fingers: he heard the voices of Barbara Burns and his guardian close at hand languidly discussing death and love: at least she was talking of love surviving death, and he was laughing at her. She was saying: 'I know positively that a woman's love for a man will survive the worst humiliation he can put upon her. He may be cruel enough to kill her, yet she will go on loving him.'

And Mr Macarthy: 'Has a man been cruel enough to kill you?'

Then Barbara: 'I don't exactly mean that.'

Again Mr Macarthy: 'Has he killed any of your friends?'

And Barbara: 'You know I don't mean that.'

And Mr Macarthy: 'Then how and what do you really know?'

And then Miss Burns rather plaintively: 'From my inner consciousness I know that a woman's love for a man will survive anything.'

'A Tabby cat's love for a Tom will survive anything,' said Mr Macarthy, 'so long as nobody drowns the kittens.'

'I don't think that that was at all a nice thing for you to say to me,' said Miss Burns with pursed lips.

'It's not the sort of idea that occurs to Tinkler,' Mr Macarthy confessed, 'but if it did Lady Bland would be as annoyed with him as you are with me.'

Miss Burns was softened. 'I'm never annoyed with you, but I don't think that you treat me at all nicely.'

Mr Macarthy on Caroline

'If you don't think that I treat you nicely,' said Mr Macarthy gravely, 'I think you ought to cut me.'

Miss Burns made a dramatic gesture. 'Why do you always mistake me?' she cried.

'It is sometimes more convenient,' he answered blandly: whereupon she dashed into the other room, where Adam thought he could hear her sobbing: but on Mr Macarthy following there was laughter, and he could hear his guardian say: 'It is time for you to go home; would you prefer a car or cab?'

Adam heard her say that she would walk and his guardian answer: 'You will not.' Still arguing the point she went off with Mr Macarthy, leaving Adam without a farewell and the newspaper cutting still in his hand. His soul was torn with conflicting emotions; for he was cut to the quick by Barbara going off with his guardian, oblivious of himself: shocked with himself for being again jealous of his guardian: and all the while wondering at himself for being alive when Caroline Brady lay dead.

And it was he who had done her to death, or at least been a partner to her self foredoing. . . . He thought he saw death laughing at him from the foot of the bed. . . . Love and Death. . . . Of these things Barbara and his guardian had been talking beside his bed while he had been knowing Love and Death, walking with them hand in hand. . . . What did those others know of Love and Death? Barbara certainly nothing. . . . His guardian? His guardian knew everything. . . . Did he know about him and Caroline, Caroline who was lying to-night for the first time in her grave at Glansevin. How long would she lie there? How long do bodies last? Hamlet asked that question of the grave-digger in the play; the play . . . Barbara Burns was acting in a play, pretending to die perhaps, while Caroline was really dying last Thursday. . . . And to-day he was making love to Barbara as he had never made love to Caroline. . . .

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And Caroline lying in her grave, whom four days ago he had loved as he would never love Barbara. . . . Caroline's body was lying in her grave stiller than he lay now in his bed. . . . God ! The coldness of lying there in a coffin six feet deep in the clay of dreary Glasnevin. . . . What nonsense he was talking. Poor Caroline was lying there dead and senseless as an old cat on a dust-heap beside the canal. . . . Beside the canal. . . . Dead as a cat whose kittens were drowned or a deader cat that had borne no kittens. . . . Why had poor Caroline been ever alive? Why, being alive, had she for many moments, unforgettable moments, controlled every impulse of his soul. . . ? Of his soul, what of her own soul? What of the soul that had left three days ago the body of Caroline Brady, the body in whose arms he had lain last Monday on the canal bank, and to-day had passed over the canal bank to lie to-night for the first time in the grave at Glasnevin? Was the soul of Caroline still with her body, battling with her coffin lid to break forth to him . . . ? Or was it flinging itself through a wave of endless fire against the gates of hell? . . . Was it perhaps calling to him to come to her there if he loved her?

A sweat burst forth all over him : he shook with something that was fear and still more rage. With a spasm he plunged out of bed and knelt on the floor, as once he had knelt on the floor of the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, to pray for the soul of Emily Robinson, but in far other mood.

'God !' he cried, 'God ! I cannot see that she and I have sinned against any person or any thing. But if it pleases You to say we have sinned, then let the punishment of both be mine, for I can better bear punishment than she. But I cannot bear that she should be punished because of me.' He raised his voice : 'Come, oh God ! strike me now. I'm not a bit afraid when I think of her.' Then his voice quavered

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into sobs as he thought of the utter pitifulness of her end, and the thought of her lying dead in her grave at Glasnevin, deaf even to the knowledge that he was striving at the uttermost cost to come to her aid.

Mr Macarthy returned to find him prostrate on the floor, hysterically cursing and sobbing. But the suggestion of his guardian's presence rapidly soothed him and his head had not been long on the pillow when he found himself telling calmly, and almost with detachment, the whole story of his connection with Caroline Brady, from their first meeting below the steps of the hospital in Eccles Street to their parting by the creaking gate in Spring Avenue. He did not shrink from a faithful reproduction in substance of his Caroline's allusion to his guardian himself.

Adam's interest in life was so great that he found himself studying his guardian's face, even as he told him what he deemed to be a rare and tragic tale. But Mr Macarthy's face betrayed nothing: more than ever Sphinx-like with the ghost of a wistful smile. At the end he said: 'You may sleep soundly to-night, Adam; for it is certain you cannot sleep so soundly as your little lady-love.'

Adam scrambled nervously the hem of his sheet. 'You don't think . . . ' Words failed him.

'It is not a question of thinking: it is one of moral certainty,' said Mr Macarthy gently but firmly. 'The poor child's troubles, so far as they are in any sense comprehensible to the human brain, are over once and for all. She is better dead.'

Adam looked up startled. 'Better dead, sir?'

His guardian nodded gravely. 'So far as I can form an opinion, she is better dead.'

'I wish I could have seen her first,' said Adam, though not really sure of this in his mind.

'You could have done no great good,' his guardian answered, 'but you may feel confident that you did

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her no harm. Indeed, her affection for you was probably the tenderest and most gracious emotion of her sad little life, and I like to think that you may have been her last thought ere she died.'

Adam's throat choked as he said: 'I'll never forget her, never. That's all I know.' He broke off: 'But she never talked as if her life was sad.'

'It was full of the saddest of all possibilities,' said his guardian, 'and that is why she is better dead now, before she even suspected what these possibilities were.'

'I would have married her,' Adam protested, 'the moment I was old enough.'

Mr Macarthy shook his head. 'You would not, and, to do the poor child justice, I don't believe she would have married you.'

'You think,' said Adam, after a long pause for cogitation, 'after all, you do think that her life was futile?'

'I do not,' his guardian directly answered. 'Her life was not futile. She has been a good friend to you, and I hold you to your promise, never to forget it.'

Chapter Thirty-Five

GROWING UP

IT seemed as if the cause that slew Caroline gave Adam a stronger grip of life; for, in spite of the risks he ran, leaving his bed and the fever of remorse he was flung in by the news of her death, the next morning Dr Ahern pronounced him convalescent, and in a few days he was about again, with a sharpened appetite for all the wonders of this world, which daily, under the interpretation of his guardian, was becoming more wonderful to him. Caroline Brady, his first love, was dead: but all things else were more than ever alive: they were alive that summer with the presage of conflict, and, as autumn drew nigh, Death himself seemed to come alive, when Adam heard the shooting by the river bank, when the King's soldiers shot down unarmed civilians, and a few days later the soldiers of half the kings of the earth were so occupied. Winter found the world at war.

Winter wore through with the world still deeper at war, and Adam's birthday was honoured by the revelation of a new variety in the sport of kings, when there drifted across the plains of Flanders the first whiff of poison gas. But Adam was less interested in this new method of slaughter than in the fact that he was at last sixteen, and felt, though he did not look, a man. Already he had gone to the Muses Club, though only on Saturday evenings and other occasions of special sufferance, as a child: now, by his guardian's influence and a general tacit consent, a point was stretched by the committee to admit him to

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membership: and, despite his youth, he became not the least popular member of that community, even among the men. Only Mr Leaper-Carahar, C.B., remained consistently his enemy, and the poet Tinkler was at pains to cheapen his achievements. The pair of them had little in common, but they were agreed in a frequently expressed regret that a young fellow so notoriously wanting in breeding should be foisted on them by one suspect of revolutionary opinions, with as little awe for Mr Leaper-Carahar's official authority as for Mr Tinkler's poesy.

The plethoric dignity of the one, and the slim elegance of the other were equally ruffled by the intrusion, and would foregather in prominent places to express a joint disapproval. On them the Marchesa, as head of the extreme pro-Adamites, waged a war untrammelled by the traditional courtesies of even civil strife: and they fought at a peculiar disadvantage. For, although Mr Leaper-Carahar daily advised his department that she ought to be hanged, socially he could not refrain from crawling before her as the Earl of Derrydown's daughter: and the poet, who had consented to her playing Deirdre solely in consideration of her having been at school with Lady Bland, went in bodily fear of her since she had beaten him with her umbrella at the dress rehearsal of his masterpiece. Mr Marcus Pim, who claimed to have been privileged to be present on this occasion, reported (though not in the columns of the *Express*) that the poet had divulged his opinion that the Marchesa was no lady, and she had retorted that he was an hermaphrodite. But he damaged the credibility of this story by quoting from a too obviously imaginary letter from Lady Bland, protesting against her old schoolfellow's insulting language. Mr Pim was more entertaining as a conversationalist than with a pen in his hand: when, as even the amiable Mr Burns admitted, he became like a bad journalist, only worse.

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His own attitude towards the great controversy was that of a trimmer: he thought Adam should not be admitted on equal terms to the society of ladies, and more particularly that of Miss Barbara Burns: but he also thought that it would be injudicious for him to quarrel over such a trifle with the ladies in question, to say nothing of the mysteriously cogent Macarthy, for whom he had early invented the sobriquet of 'The Hidden Hand.'

As for Mr Macarthy's interest in his young friend, Mr Pim never experienced any difficulty, at all events after dinner, in accounting for that. It was more difficult to account for the Marchesa's: but Mr Pim had a theory which he defended as not impossible. After all, Burke gave the Marchesa's age as only sixty-three, and Adam was getting on for seventeen. . . . Stranger things had happened. He remembered when he was a kid someone telling him that the wife of an emergency man near Killrush had twins on her fiftieth birthday, although the lot of them, mind you, were under a boycott at the time, which you'd think would have depressed her spirits. And there was no denying that Adam resembled both the Marchesa and his guardian. The former likeness struck Mr Pim, the latter was the more obvious to Barbara Burns. 'But, more than anything, he reminds me,' said she, 'of the portrait of my grandfather the poet, in the National Gallery.'

'Poet, indeed: is that what you call him?' said Mr Pim, posing his spatted feet on the club fender, with his back against the mantelpiece. 'Sure, your grandfather, Sir David Byron-Quinn, was an officer in the cavalry: he only wrote, just as I do, to please himself.'

'I don't think he wrote at all like you,' said Miss Burns, meaning to hurt, but failing in her intent. 'Do you remember when that picture of him was done?'

'I do, indeed,' said Mr Pim; 'I mean, I could tell

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you when it was done. . . . It was done by the Marchesa when she came back from Paris, where she'd been working under Stevens, or Boldini, or one of these fellows, about the time I was born. She and Byron-Quinn . . . ' He broke off with a whistle. 'I often wondered what it was that attracted the Marchesa to Macarthy.'

'What do you mean?' the girl asked angrily.

'Why, about the time you were born they were great flames,' said Mr Pim with an oleaginous smile, 'just as about the time I enlightened the world with my presence she was a great flame of your grandfather's. You mightn't think it to look at her, but she's a great war-horse, is the old Marchesa, what the French call a grongammerroo. And it occurred to me this moment that, although Macarthy goes in for being a Socialist and all that sort of blatherumskite, his mother was a pretty close cousin of Byron-Quinn's.'

'Was she?' said Barbara; 'then that would make her a connection of mine, but I never heard my mother mention her.'

'I dare say not,' said Mr Pim with a quizzical air, 'but, anyhow, it's natural enough that young Macfadden, as they are pleased to call him, should resemble all three.'

'I'm glad you think so,' said Miss Burns, suppressing a desire to garrotte Mr Pim with his fashionable necktie and then place his remains upon the fire before which he so elegantly balanced himself. So will the gentlest young woman desire to entreat the most ardent lover when he touches impertinently on the subject of the one beloved: and Adam was soon aware that there were moments when Miss Burns looked kindly upon Mr Macarthy, though he was not yet aware that she had accepted her mother's brilliant decision that she should, if possible, marry Mr Leaper-Carahar, C.B.

Except at such moments as he was proving himself, or at least appearing to prove himself, of service to

her, Barbara regarded Mr Pim as rather a futile toad, but his capacity as a compendium of scandalous chronicles, only too willing to be consulted and to find out what he did not know, gave him a definite value in her eyes, enabling her, as it did, to take a distinguished part in the conversation of her elders. She was deeply interested to know that there was some connection, however slight, between her blood and Stephen Macarthy's. From Mr Pim's tone she judged that he knew more about this matter than he had put in words. With affected nonchalance, she said to him: 'Of course, I'd forgotten that Mrs Macarthy was a distant cousin. Mother always says we have too many relations, particularly poor relations, to remember them all. . . . Mrs Macarthy died young, didn't she?'

Mr Marcus Pim cleared his throat with the air of making an important announcement: 'Very young. . . . In point of fact, she died when Stephen was born.'

Barbara gave a little cry of dismay. 'How sad for Stephen!' she exclaimed. 'And I suppose his father brought him up then?'

Mr Pim's eyes squinted along the cigarette he was lighting. 'Mr Macarthy brought him up,' said he.

'Adam is very like his father,' she said quickly.

Mr Marcus Pim looked at her, inhaled deeply, almost succeeded in blowing a successful smoke-ring into the air, and said, following with his eyes the abortion: 'Do you tell me so?' He appeared to be about to enlarge upon the subject when he caught her eye, and decided instead to announce merely his need to write a letter.

Adam accepted as inevitable Barbara's weakness for his guardian. He knew from Caroline Brady that it was possible for a woman to be in love with that middle-aged and rather dowdy gentleman even without hearing him talk: and when he talked he had the

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power to hold most people, young or old. He conceived that Barbara's feeling for his guardian was much the same as his own, only complicated by, what he regarded in this instance as, the unfortunate difference of sex. He felt sure that her affection for Mr Macarthy did not preclude the possibility of her feeling affection for him. And, indeed, it did not.

Nevertheless, she resented Mr Macarthy's prescience when he told her that one day, sooner or later, she would find Adam the most attractive man in her circle. 'Where will you be then?' she asked him sharply.

'Still on earth, I hope,' he answered, 'and not too old to be interested in your interests.'

'You never cared a fig about my interests,' she cried, indiscreetly loudly for a conversation at the Muses Club.

'I have considered your interests more than my own,' he answered, 'so far as I am able to differentiate between my own interests and those of the people in whom I take an interest.'

'I believe you love the Marchesa more than me, she pouted.

'Your tone of voice implies that you do not believe it,' he responded thoughtfully.

'But you don't deny it,' she snorted with indignation.

Mr Macarthy was unmoved, saying judiciously: 'I deny that I love her more in the sense you appear to have in your mind at the actual moment. . . . But what has this to do with Adam?'

'Adam?' echoed Miss Burns: 'even if I wanted to, and he were old enough, d'you think my people would allow me to marry Adam Macfadden?'

'Do you purpose to consult them as to your husband?' said Mr Macarthy drily.

Miss Burns let her eyes fall. 'Why not?'

'I was under the impression,' said Mr Macarthy,

'that I once heard you saying you valued no opinion except mine.'

'That,' she retorted quickly, 'was when we both thought the same.'

Smoothly he returned: 'But now you think the same as your parents?'

'Mother,' said Miss Burns lamely, 'Mother says she had the same trouble as I when she was young.'

Mr Macarthy laughed outright. 'I don't believe a word of it. I might as well say that I have had the same troubles as Adam Macfadden.'

In a second Barbara turned on him: 'Then it's true what Marcus Pim says? You are his father?'

Mr Macarthy's laugh faded into his normal wistful smile: 'I wish it were true, for both our sakes,' he said gently; 'for I believe Adam's father to be even a less presentable member of society than myself.'

'And yet you think him good enough for me to marry?' she said with half real indignation.

'I confess,' said Mr Macarthy, 'that Adam's undoubted mother and probable father do not move in that sphere of which his grandparents were once luminous, if erratic, stars.'

Barbara's eyes brightened at the thought of romantic mystery. 'Is he really and truly of good family?'

Mr Macarthy's smile was more than ever Sphinx-like: 'I hope you will not think it snobbish of me to mention my confidence that his grandfather was a baronet and his great-grandfather an earl.'

'Oh,' said Barbara, 'I wish I'd known that before. . . . Do you really want Adam to marry me more than anyone else?'

'No,' said Mr Macarthy simply; 'I'd rather he married a girl called Josephine O'Meagher.'

Miss Burns frowned. 'Isn't she a nun?'

'Not yet,' said Mr Macarthy; 'she was to have entered last Corpus Christi, but I managed to persuade . . .'

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Barbara looked to see why Mr Macarthy had stopped, and saw him abruptly open the folding-doors to discover a lady of uncertain age, not perhaps so old as she was young, apparently polishing the carpet nails next the threshold.

'Oh,' said the lady quite coolly, as she met Mr Macarthy's eye, 'is that you? I've lost six-pence.'

'My dear Miss Macfie, you will break your father's heart,' was Mr Macarthy's gentle answer as he passed her to go downstairs. Miss Macfie laughed, not prettily. Many considered her not unattractive: Mr Pim had described her in his most triumphant epigram as one who ought, for her own sake, if no one else's, to get married: that sufficiently described Miss Macfie. Her laugh died away with Mr Macarthy's footsteps: though the mocking expression lingered on her face as she said to Barbara: 'Alone with him? What would Leaper-Carahar say?'

'Have you never been alone with him?' asked Miss Burns with the futility of one hopelessly at bay.

'I am not engaged to Mr Leaper-Carahar.'

'Who said that I was?' Barbara returned.

'Your mother,' came the quick riposte.

Poor Barbara, driven to unwonted forgetfulness of grammar, asked: 'Who did she say it to?'

She was struck hard by the reply: 'To Leaper-Carahar himself.'

'You mean to say?' cried Barbara, sorely hurt.

'I mean to say,' came Calvinia's last overwhelming broadside, 'that to-day, after lunch, I heard your mother say to him, in this very room, that she considered you as good as engaged to him.'

In spite of herself, Barbara put the fatal question: 'What did he say?'

'What could he say?' was Calvinia's coup de grace. 'You know what a man's like after luncheon. I suppose he said he hoped he'd make you happy. And I

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hope he will. . . . He wouldn't me: I'd almost rather have Macarthy.'

'I hate you!' screamed Barbara, clenching her hands.

'You always did,' returned Calvinia, eyeing her scornfully. 'D'you think I care a damn whether you do or not?'

Adam, entering the room at this point, found them outstaring one another, and asked in innocence: 'Are you rehearsing "Deirdre" or what?'

'I'm sure I don't know what your friend Barbara is playing at,' declared Miss Macfie, and, with a gesture of disdain, she flounced away, leaving the door open behind her.

This Barbara carefully closed, and then drew Adam over to the window, whence they looked down upon the Green and that noble effigy which many take to be St Stephen, but was intended by the artist to resemble King George II. Adam did not see this work of art, but only the tears in Barbara's eyes, and he put his arm, respectfully affectionate, around her slim waist. Thereupon she whispered: 'You dear little thing,' and put her arm round his neck.

At length she said again: 'I wish you were old enough now to take me to India, and that we could start now.' The words were murmured just loud enough for him to hear and be fired by: but she checked his ready torrent of affection by adding, very matter of fact: 'You're not, and never will be. . . . So what's the use of talking? Let's go and drink tea at Mitchell's instead.'

Though he had been thinking of Josephine all day, and wondering if, after all, Mr Macarthy would triumph and keep her in the world until he grew fully to man's estate, Adam's heart was curiously high and happy as Barbara and he walked, body fluttering by body, past the Shelbourne Hotel, where first, as a ragged infant, he had witnessed the existence of a life that

Adam and Caroline

was something more than a struggle for food and drink, and down Grafton Street to Mitchell's. He forgot what a little while had passed since he walked down it with Caroline Brady, and noticed for the first time that Hollander's was almost opposite Mitchell's: but it was open, and, perhaps because he saw it from the other side of the street, seemed different from what it had been when he met her coming out. And yet, he remembered now how, on his thirteenth birthday, leaving Mitchell's with Barbara, he had seen Caroline, no doubt coming out of Hollander's, and wondered if she had been her own ghost.

Then, in the restaurant, that old notion of indefinite identity came over him, and Barbara seemed to him in a sense Caroline: Caroline as she ought to have been, if only the gods had been good to her. It did not occur to him that any girl of her age could be more happily circumstanced than Barbara Burns, with her charming form and cultured mind and manifold physical and mental accomplishments: to say nothing of being the only child of her brilliant mother and rightfully popular father. To him Barbara Burns, as she loosened her pretty wraps and showed her pretty throat, peeping, all milk-white innocence, at him from the other side of the little table at Mitchell's, or leaning forward to listen to his undertone so that her elbows kissed his, seemed the human embodiment of a fairy princess. The embryonic critic lurking in his brain whispered that the charm lay in her having a spice of Caroline's devilry, without a taint of Caroline's coarseness: but the romantic trumpeted persistently that in the past love had been joy slain by death, in the present triumphant over it. For sure, Adam had known no happier hour than that with Barbara Burns at Mitchell's, during which he dreamt himself her accepted lover.

It was cooling when she commenced, with an abrupt movement, to gather her things to go: deadly chilling

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when she resisted his effort to pay their bill : 'No, no, my dear little man,' she said; 'you know, Mr Leaper-Carahar wouldn't like it.'

'Leaper-Carahar !' cried Adam, driving the nails into the palm of his ungloved hand.

Barbara's fingers on his lips (just like Caroline) silenced him. 'You must have heard we were engaged.'

Adam thrust from his lips the hand he had almost kissed. 'If I had, I'd have said it was a damned lie !' he stormed. 'Damn you and your Leaper-Carahar !'

Then, conscious that he was making a scene Barbara was endeavouring to hide, he fled from the lighted shop and blundered into the wintry darkness of Grafton Street, his fingers gripping the throat of Mr Leaper-Carahar, C.B., more apoplectic in Adam's green-eyed phantasy than in reality.

At the corner of Nassau Street a draught of north-east wind, driving sleet across the College park, cooled his revengeful pride and wakened shame. He heard his own voice saying to his lady-love of a moment ago : 'Damn you and your Leaper-Carahar !' in the same blasting rage as he had once cursed Father Tudor and his Three Divine Persons.

And some other memory stirred within him. . . . Perhaps the first of his life. . . . Was it not just with such frantic cadence he had once heard his mother shriek at his godfather : 'Damn you and your Emily Robinson' ? . . .

What did that mean, if even in those distant days she had not been infatuated with O'Toole ? . . . Then a lurid light pierced his brain and established there an idea which, by the time he reached Noll Goldsmith's kindly pitiful effigy, had become a settled conviction. Clinging to the College railings, he pressed his forehead close against them, and, while the trams groaned and thundered and clashed their bells behind him, he thought : 'O'Toole begot me. . . . God ! what a filthy thing is love.'

Adam and Caroline

He had been standing thus he knew not how long, when a familiar deep voice spoke down at him: 'You are ill, my friend; I think you live in my direction, Mountjoy Square.'

Adam let go the railings and nodded silently.

'You had better take my arm and we'll walk on together,' said the big man. Adam obeyed, and, as they crossed by Tommy Moore's statue to Westmoreland Street, said mechanically: 'Thank your honour, and God bless you.'

For he knew that he was being cared for once more by Dr Hillingdon-Ryde, who had been kind to him when he was a child: and for the moment he was struggling with the nightmare of being a child again.

Chapter Thirty-Six

OF A TOMBSTONE

DR HILLINGDON-RYDE delivered Adam into his guardian's hands at Mountjoy Square. 'Our young friend was looking ill when I passed him outside Trinity. So I suggested that we should walk home together.'

He said no more, but Mr Macarthy read the surmise in his manly eyes, and smiled: 'Adam does not drink,' he said, 'but he suffers badly from nerves.'

'The dickens he does, poor fellow!' exclaimed the big man, as one who knew them not, and took his leave with a kindly farewell.

Mr Macarthy produced an unwonted half bottle of claret and put it before the fire. The warmth of it restored Adam to his normal self as they shared it for dinner: And after dinner, before very long, his guardian saw him home to St George's Place and watched him go to bed.

He had the more reason for this since there was no one to understand Adam at St George's Place now: Herr Behre was no longer to be found in the eyrie that had been his refuge while a whole generation of Dubliners were born into the world and married and brought forth young, and perhaps left the world again. He had been one of those who declared that war was impossible: 'The peoples of Europe will not sanction it,' he insisted; 'their leaders are not that *crétin* Wilhelm nor that slink-butcher Poincaré: The men that matter, the leaders of the people, are Lieb-knecht and Jaurés. . . . There is no enmity between them.' But when Liebknecht was arrested, and

Adam and Caroline

Jaurés murdered, he packed his trunks, saying: 'The peoples are as Gaderine swine: the devils of the kings are entered into them.' When Mr Leaper-Carahar hinted that the Castle would not allow him to leave the country, he laughed in his face. 'I am not a European, *Gott sei Dank*: I am an American citizen. . . . I'll leave you to your blood feast.' And Mr Leaper-Carahar, though well practised in the art of straining the law, was regretfully advised by Mr Solicitor-General Macfie he must fail to stay him. So Mr Macarthy took over his room, with the piano and all therein (save the portrait of the plain woman bearing the inscription 'Vorwärts') and turned it into a study for Adam. And, for love of Herr Behre, and partly because he could no longer bear the quaver of 'When other lips and other hearts,' Adam would pay a Danegeld to the cornet player every Friday night: to be rewarded by an impressionistic and tentative rendering of 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' which the inebriate Mr Murphy on the first floor, being a Redmondite in politics, would rise and partially stand to honour, believing it to be 'God Save the King.'

As Mr Macarthy saw Adam to bed, he continued to talk only of indifferent things. But the next morning, on entering as usual the sitting-room at Mountjoy Square, Adam was hailed by the straight question: 'What passed between you and Miss Burns at Mitchell's yesterday afternoon?'

'Nothing,' said Adam, conscious for the first time, as he faced his guardian, of the ludicrous side of what he had deemed a tragedy.

'Pardon me for pointing out that such an answer is unbecoming to a question from me to you,' said Mr Macarthy, and the words fell coldly on Adam's understanding.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' he answered, calling himself to attention. 'I see now I behaved badly to . . . to Miss Burns in Mitchell's.'

Of a Tombstone

'Why did you behave badly?' Seeing that Adam struggled vainly to answer, Mr Macarthy added: 'Do you suppose you had any provocation to, shall we say, make an ass of yourself?'

'Yes,' said Adam boldly.

His guardian's Sphinx-like smile perhaps broadened a hair's-breadth: 'She provoked you to make an ass of yourself?'

Adam's forehead sweated to the answer: 'Yes.'

Mr Macarthy went on sweetly: 'It was very wrong of Barbara to provoke you to make an ass of yourself in a public place. If you may tell me, without breach of confidence, I should be glad to know how she did it.'

Then Adam told him, with a reasonable degree of accuracy and no deliberate concealment, all that had passed between Barbara and himself from the moment of his interruption of her conversation with Calvinia until he lost his head in the tea-shop. His coolness dropped from him as he spoke, and the narrative ended in the angry cry: 'I call it disgusting that she should marry Leaper-Carahar.'

'So do I,' said Mr Macarthy, 'but apparently she does not think it so, or you may be quite sure that she would not do it.'

Adam looked at his guardian, and commenced eagerly: 'If you told her it was disgusting . . .'

His guardian stopped him with a peremptory gesture. 'I have no right to interfere. . . . She has never even mentioned him to me as a possible husband. If she had consulted me . . .' he broke off: 'We have no right to suppose that because we find a man disgusting, a woman will find him so.' His tone hardened: 'Your poor little friend did things that were disgusting to you, but you may be sure they did not seem so to her.'

Adam blurted indignantly: 'Barbara Burns is very different from Caroline Brady.'

Adam and Caroline

His guardian eyed him gravely, his smile now purely wistful: 'Are you sure of that . . .? Circumstance apart, eh, are you really sure of that?'

Adam shrugged his shoulders. 'I'm sure of nothing,' he said sullenly; 'I dare say all girls are the same at heart.'

'I think not,' Mr Macarthy declared; 'but there are varying degrees of difference, and I suggest to you, for example, that there is less difference temperamentally between Caroline Brady and Barbara Burns than between Barbara and, let us say, Josephine O'Meagher.'

A wave of unaccountable indignation swept through Adam as he growled: 'She is altogether different.'

His guardian's answer chilled him: 'I am glad you think so, though I beg you to remember that I do not suggest she is in the sum of all things better or worse. All that I know positively about her is that she appears to be the most selfish of all three.'

Adam fell into a chair, not knowing what to answer, when his guardian went on: 'Anyhow, if Josephine really enters her convent, she has made a choice away from us and lies outside our scheme of things.'

Adam's mind spoke for itself: 'She hasn't entered yet.'

He was not quite sure that his guardian did not steal a glance at him as he answered: 'She seems determined to do so. I had thought that it was her mother's fault urging her to it, but it seems she no longer wants urging.'

'I'd like to see her,' said Adam.

'There is nothing to prevent your doing so,' his guardian pointed out, but, Adam offering no sign, he went on: 'It seems that, after all, she is a less living factor in your life to come, at all events in the immediate future, than poor little Caroline in her grave.' He added, almost solemnly: 'I am convinced that that unhappy child did differ from Barbara in one way, and that is that, in her fashion, she deeply and unselfishly loved you.'

Of a Tombstone

Adam nodded, his face buried in his arms, then curiosity roused him to look up at his guardian. 'How do you know?' he exclaimed.

'It is sufficient that I do know,' said Mr Macarthy: 'I do know that she loved you, and you are aware that I also love you.'

Adam nodded. 'I am not such a fool as not to know that.'

'Thank you,' said Mr Macarthy, laying his hand, as his way was, on his shoulder. 'Loving you as I do, my instinct tells me that I have reason to be grateful to her. So I am showing that gratitude in the only way I can'—he lifted him by the arm. 'Up with you, and come for a drive with me.'

Mr Macarthy called a car from the stand opposite, and they drove down Belvedere Place, and by the Circular Road over Phibsborough canal bridge, and then, instead of continuing, as Adam supposed, to the park, turned by Dumphy's Corner, the way he had gone with Father Innocent long, long ago to the Botanic Gardens. But, Westmoreland Bridge passed, they turned into the Prospect Road and stopped at the cemetery gates. And for the first time since he had prayed at the grave of Malachy Macfadden, Adam entered these gates. A moment later, with burning eyes, he read these words on a simply-fashioned slab of Connemara marble:

CAROLINE,
THE FRIEND OF ADAM.
R.I.P.

'That is all I could do,' said Mr Macarthy. 'If you succeed in life, I take it that you will keep the stone clean. If you fail, it will moulder away, and Caroline be forgotten with her friend.'

Adam tried to say something, but failed. He knelt down, but it was not to pray for Caroline: it was to

Adam and Caroline

kiss the stone that covered her. He fell forward on it, crying, and Mr Macarthy let him do it.

Presently he swung him to his feet, saying grimly : 'Enough of that.' As he led him out through the gates down the best-kept paths sprinkled with the metal tablets promising 'Perpetual Care,' he continued, in the same dry tone : 'We think that she will sleep more sweetly there than Barbara in the house of Mr Leaper-Carahar. . . . But who are we to form opinions about the soul of any woman?'

Later on, when they had regained Mountjoy Square, Adam, in tears most of the way, though not unhappy, his guardian said to him, gravely cheerful : 'You need not worry because you fancy yourself in love with several people at the same time. There is really only one thing about women that I pretend to know—most decent men love every woman, and almost every woman loves a decent man. But what I would have you bear in mind is, that if a man ceases to be decent I think he will find that decent women cease to care for him.' There was a moment's silence, then he added : 'I do not say that this is finally true : but so far it appears to me to be true within my experience. Anyhow, my dear man, never be depressed about the women you fancy have treated you badly. Probably it is purely your imagination, but, mark again, if you suspect yourself of treating a woman badly, then, believe me, you cannot worry half enough.' He wound up his homily with the impressive caution : 'Be sure that it is yourself you worry and not her. . . . Remorse helps nobody.'

Chapter Thirty-Seven

MRS LEAPER-CARAHAR'S AT HOME

CHRISTMAS passed, and, Lent at hand, Barbara Burns married Mr Leaper-Carahar. Mr Macarthy found an excuse for not going to the wedding in the fact that there was a war on. A little while before he had brought Adam for a change of air to Cork, and showed him Kilcrea Abbey, which, he told him, was the inspiration of one of Sir David's poems which Adam had learnt to recite at the Muses Club :

In by the hole in the old Abbey wall
My love and I passed with a solemn foot-fall,
And we drove out the dogs, that their feet might not
tread
On the lowly, holy bones of the dead.

And she turned from me, in the cloistral gloom,
To peer through a reft in her father's tomb,
And she shrank from the sight of the things that were
And the foulness that mouldered upon the fair

And she cried : 'The terrors that there I see,
Are they one day to come to me?'
And I promised her then that when she should die
Then I, on guard, by her side should lie.

One moonlight night Adam went off by himself and tried the effect of reciting it in the Abbey, but, frightened by rats, came home in the middle of the third line. He thought it would be easier to keep a promise of this kind at Glasnevin, and consoled himself by

Adam and Caroline

reflecting that the baronet himself, if he promised anything of the kind in real life, made no effort to keep it. 'D'you suppose that poem was written to anyone in particular?' he asked Mr Macarthy.

'I suppose it was,' said Mr Macarthy.

'Do you know?' Adam pursued.

'Know what?' said Mr Macarthy testily.

'Who the lady was?' Adam faltered.

'Yes,' Mr Macarthy said, in a tone which did not encourage further questioning.

Adam tried plain statement. 'I suppose it was the Marchesa?' and, as Mr Macarthy did not deny it, felt some confidence that he was right.

When they returned to town Adam informed the Marchesa that he had visited her family burial-place with his guardian. The Marchesa looked at him surprisedly: 'Whatever made him bring you there?' she asked, and, without waiting for answer to a question which he was surprised to find her so little interested in, she went on: 'Your flame, Barbara Burns, is back with that loathsome husband of hers.'

Kilcrea Abbey was at once forgotten, and the affairs of Sir David Byron-Quinn vanished before those of his granddaughter. 'Why,' said the Marchesa, 'you've gone pale; you don't mean to say you really care? . . . Why, you're as bad as Sir David himself. They say he fainted once, when he was seventeen, when he heard of the death of a schoolgirl, just as the other Byron, the poet, did. Anyhow, I'm rather amused, for they're giving a reception at their new house in Waterloo Road next week, and Mrs Burns has insisted that I must go, although Mr Carahar, you know . . . Well, you know what Mr Leaper-Carahar is, don't you?'

Adam answered between his teeth: 'I'd like to knock his head off.'

The Marchesa stooped and kissed his forehead. 'Darling,' she said, 'some day let us do it.'

Mrs Leaper-Carahar's At Home

The idea of assisting the Marchesa to knock the head off Mr Leaper-Carahar, C.B., made Adam look forward to the meeting with Barbara Leaper-Carahar with greater pleasure than he had anticipated. When his guardian was for declining the invitation to the At Home, Adam expressed his desire to go; and so Mr Macarthy, rejoiced to find him recovered from his love-sickness, accepted for both.

Yet, the day of this first At Home of Mrs Leaper-Carahar Adam wakened with a premonition of evil. Calling for Mr Macarthy at Mountjoy Square, he told him as much, and Mr Macarthy laughed. 'There is no such thing as evil,' said he.

'But,' Adam protested, 'I feel it so clearly.'

'So do all Irishmen,' his guardian explained: 'it comes from our long inheritance of fear. I am terrified in my dreams by the howling of a banshee, that existed only in the imagination of my ancestors.'

'But if you heard the howling of a real banshee?' Adam suggested.

'If I heard the howling of a real banshee, it would give me unqualified pleasure,' Mr Macarthy assured him, provided that I knew it was a banshee and not a cat.'

'You don't believe in the supernatural at all?' Adam queried.

'If by supernatural you mean something opposed to the natural, I do not,' said Mr Macarthy firmly; 'but if by supernatural you mean things that might appear unnatural to a congenital idiot like your friend Leaper-Carahar, or a zany such as Tinkler, then I do not deny the existence of such supernatural things. I will grant you that there are more things in heaven and earth than were ever dreamed of by the committee of the Kildare Street Club or the senate of either of the universities. . . . At all events, the knowledge of them has not been recorded on the minutes of these corporations,' he added with characteristic caution.

Adam and Caroline

'Do you think the world is just a joke?' said Adam.

'If I do,' said Mr Macarthy, 'I think it a thundering good one, and not a disgusting piece of folly as it is represented by the Fathers.'

After all, the day promised to be an amusing one; for, lunching at the Muses Club on the way to Waterloo Road, they encountered Mr Tinkler, in a new fancy costume, and unusually dapper: his breast bulged with a freshly typed manuscript.

'Dear Mrs Burns,' he explained, 'has induced me most charmingly to read my revised version of "Deirdre" to the people at Mrs Carahar's At Home.'

'The dickens she has!' said Mr Macarthy smoothly, as if it were a compliment. 'And what did Leaper-Carahar say to that?'

Mr Tinkler looked around him and dropped his voice: 'I don't think he knows yet: dear Mrs Burns means it as a charming surprise.'

'She has a gift for that sort of thing,' said Mr Macarthy.

'She has indeed,' Mr Tinkler agreed, 'a charming gift. She really loves poetry. . . . Even my poor efforts. . . . Though I know that I am not as great as some people tell me.'

'Come,' said Mr Macarthy, filling the poet's glass, 'You know in your heart that your poetry is much better than even I have ever pretended to think.'

'It is very charming of you,' said the poet vaguely, and emptied his glass. 'I am sure that you would never say anything you did not mean, any more than dear Mrs Burns.'

Mr Macarthy said in an undertone to Adam: 'He got home on me that time.' To Mr Tinkler he said: 'You believe in necromancy, don't you?'

'Necromancy,' Mr Tinkler repeated, 'of course. I passed through that stage of enlightenment; I did believe in it until dear Lady Bland . . .'

'Converted you?' Mr Macarthy suggested.

Mrs Leaper-Carahar's At Home

'I was not going to say quite that,' Mr Tinkler declared, and added, looking at his wine-glass, which Mr Macarthy had again filled: 'I forget what I was going to say. . . . Lady Bland and I . . . ' he broke off to put his lips to his glass again, pouring some of it down his throat and more not, which seemed to recall him to himself: 'Nobody knows what she suffers from that man, that man . . . ' here he dropped his serviette, and, looking for it, continued, in a voice that was muffled by the tablecloth: 'It is natural that she should have the illusion that she is carrying her cross to . . . ' the last word was inaudible.

'Very natural,' Mr Macarthy agreed, and the conversation would have flagged, but that Adam took it up.

'Where did you say Lady Bland was carrying her cross?'

'Did I say that?' Mr Tinkler inquired. 'I thought we were talking about necromancy.'

'We were,' said Mr Macarthy. 'Our friend Adam here dreamt last night of some disastrous happening to-day, quite in the manner of Plutarch, you know, and then your mentioning the reading of your play . . . '

'My God!' said Mr Tinkler, 'he thought I might have lost the manuscript!' and unbuttoned his breast, suffering the manuscript to escape and knock over his wine-glass. 'That's nothing,' he explained to the waitress; 'it's safe, besides, I have two carbon copies.'

'I should have all the copies carbonised if I were you,' suggested Mr Macarthy, and Adam thought his guardian had gone a little too far. But Mr Tinkler gravely explained that in typewriting you were bound to have one top copy.

'Every man is a cad at times,' said Mr Macarthy as they left Mr Tinkler sobering himself with coffee, 'and you have seen me behaving like one just now. Nothing can be more contemptible than to make game of a man whose intellect you despise.'

Adam and Caroline

'Is Mr Tinkler really very silly?' Adam asked, for, in fact, he had not enjoyed his usually urbane guardian's conduct of the matter.

Mr Macarthy looked at him almost shamefacedly: 'I'm afraid it has never occurred to me as possible to take any other view of him, but that, perhaps, merely shows how unjust I can be from instinctive prejudice. I often ask myself whether I might not have regarded Blake as a literary freak had I been his contemporary; let us assume that Tinkler has really a fine intellect and give him the benefit of every doubt that arises as to the evidence of it in his play. Perhaps we shall find it to be the very best of all the Deirdre plays ever written.' He added pensively: 'I wish we were going home.'

The house in Waterloo Road presented a wonderful aspect, where the colour-schemes of the bride's vorticist friends were trampled underfoot by the Victorian furniture which the bridegroom had inherited from the founder of his family. But the most wonderful thing of all was, at all events to Adam, that Mr O'Toole opened the door. 'How delightful to meet you,' said Mr Macarthy, 'an old friend of Leaper-Carahar's, no doubt?'

Mr Byron O'Toole bowed, and answered modestly: 'He wouldn't call me that. . . . I know him better than he knows me.' Without inelegance, he dropped his mouth towards Mr Macarthy's ear: 'Maybe I'd have the cinch on him if it came to a spar. . . . Sure, Leaper-Carahar was no one until he kissed that fellow Byrne's you know what—I'd be ashamed to get on the way that fellow's got on—and he hasn't an idea in his head about how things are done in society. . . . So a mutual friend at the Castle asked me to come along and lend him a bit of a hand as a major-domo, you might call it. . . .' He went on apologetically: 'They're not the sort of people I'm used to, nor any use for Adam there to meet. . . . Bohemian, I'd call

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some of them. But, of course, the nobility and gentry are gone to this bloody war . . . a public nuisance, this war . . . ' he broke off to address himself brusquely to Mr Marcus Pim: 'Pass along there, will you? Pass along.' And then resumed his deferentially hospitable manner: 'What I wanted to tell you, Mr Macarthy, was that you mustn't touch the champagne cup. . . . It's worse than the viceregal. . . . If you've a mind to the real stuff, just wink at me and I'll make you as drunk as a lord. . . . But I won't give any to the lad there, for drink's a curse, as his namesake found it.'

'When the Romans called a thing a curse they also called it a blessing,' said Mr Macarthy.

'Sure, well I know,' Mr O'Toole assured him: 'Wasn't I a Roman myself until I learnt the truth in *John Bull* . . .' He added in a tone of now suave command: 'Pass on now, pass on, will you? . . . Even at the Castle I never allowed the Chief Secretary himself to block the stairs to the boofay.'

Passing along as directed, Adam heard his godfather in his ear: 'Whisper, now. . . . It's well you're looking. . . . Mind you do nothing to disgrace me.'

Immediately afterwards, Mr Macarthy commented: 'How much more dignified is Mr O'Toole than Mr Leaper-Carahar!' and went on, as though talking to himself: 'Am I snob enough to admit that blood tells?'

Adam thought only that Leaper-Carahar cut a monstrous figure beside his blooming bride, and he stared at her until she frowned and blushed and frowned again, and at last put her arm round as much of him as she could compass. Adam's sense of the ludicrous got the better of his jealousy, and he smiled, which seemed to please the lady no more.

After his encounter with his godfather, Adam was past surprise, and found it almost a commonplace of life in Mr Leaper-Carahar's society to meet Mrs Burns

Adam and Caroline

addressing Old Comet, attired in khaki, as Colonel Newton. He could not resist saying to Barbara: 'I seem to know your mother's friend.'

Barbara blushed: 'Do you think anyone suspects?'

Adam answered: 'I don't suppose your mother does, but what about your father?'

Barbara compressed her lips. 'Daddy isn't here,' she said, and blurted out the information: 'He can't stand my husband.'

'No more can I,' said Adam, as plainly as might be without speaking the words. But Mrs Carahar, ignoring the point, asked where Mr Macarthy was. 'He wouldn't be here,' Adam answered, 'only I asked him to bring me.'

'You needn't be rude . . .' Barbara was beginning, when there was a hubbub of interest, and the Marchesa entered, followed by another officer in khaki, who exchanged glances with Old Comet, and Adam noticed that one or the other of them kept station within three feet of her.

The Marchesa was in an excited mood. She ran at Adam and hugged him. 'My beautiful boy,' she sang rather than said: 'It is tragical to meet you here amidst this rabble of would-be English people. . . . But we shall not have to bear this for much longer now. . . . What are you looking at?' Adam was looking at the second officer in khaki pencilling a note on the shirtcuff which, contrary to Regulations, he wore. He tried to move the Marchesa out of range of the man's hearing. But the Marchesa, glancing at the officer in khaki, said to Adam in a loud voice: 'Don't mind him, dear; he's only a policeman.'

The officer bowed apologetically, saying in a respectful undertone: 'Sure, I have to do it, your ladyship.'

'I quite understand,' said the Marchesa. She regarded him with interest: 'I think I blacked your eye once. I hope it did not hurt?'

Mrs Leaper-Carahar's At Home

The officer smiled deferentially. 'Ah, not at all, your ladyship, not at all,' said he. 'Sure, that was only a suffrage scrap. You were welcome—there was nothing in that—but I ought to warn you that the Chief says that these Infant Druids of yours are a bit obstreperous, ducking recruiting officers and that; it's not for me to say anything I shouldn't, but things are getting serious now.'

The Marchesa drew herself up with dignity. 'I have always been serious,' she said, and, hearing Mrs Burns, who appeared to be collaborating with Mr O'Toole in the arrangements for the entertainment, announce that Mr Tinkler would now read his play, she turned from him and deliberately led Adam to sit down in the front row of the audience gathering for this purpose. She chose a seat next the local and temporary Colonel Newton, who appeared to Adam a trifle scared by her immediate proximity. He was not aware that the Marchesa was credited by the Intelligence Department with carrying an automatic pistol in that part of her costume where Lady Bland carried her figure.

Adam glanced around him. The audience seemed composed to a great extent of members of the Six Muses Club. Despite Mr O'Toole's effort to suppress him, Mr Marcus Pim was much in evidence, and the tallest officer in khaki was overhung by the shadow of Miss Calvinia Macfie. In the same row with Adam, but on the other flank, Mr Leaper-Carahar hovered broodily. There was khaki beside and behind him: he looked to Adam considerably older since his marriage, but he was not any thinner. Adam was conscious of his guardian sitting behind him and muttering from time to time. In front of the audience was a table with a reading desk, where Mr Tinkler fumbled his manuscript. He appeared to be trying to strike an attitude and failing in the attempt. Behind him sat Mrs Burns, obviously in the chair, and beside

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her an elderly gentleman with an ear-trumpet, which he seldom attempted to use, seeming content to find himself in the place of honour beside that brilliant lady without troubling about the proceedings.

At a signal given by Mr O'Toole, Mrs Burns rose to announce that Mr Tinkler would read his play. There was a flutter of excitement as she said, emphatically, that it was called 'Kathleen-ni-Houlihan,' and, the author being understood to protest that it was called 'Deirdre,' she rejoined archly, if esoterically: 'But we know what we know, don't we?'

'Some people don't know what they don't know,' Adam heard his guardian mutter.

Having playfully slapped Mr Tinkler, Mrs Burns continued: 'I'm sure I had no idea until I came here that I should have the privilege of taking the chair for Mr Tinkler. We all hoped that the chair would be taken by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, whom Mr Leaper-Carahar had himself invited to do Mr Tinkler honour. . . . I am sure it would have been a mutual honour . . .' she waited for applause, some of which came. 'Unfortunately, His Excellency was unable to come, so I then asked the Chief Secretary, who, as you know, is also a literary man, but he, too, was engaged.'

'Not in Ireland,' said Mr Marcus Pim, at which there was laughter.

'Why didn't you ask Jim Connolly?' the Marchesa demanded.

'I did ask Mr Connolly,' Mrs Burns brilliantly retorted, 'and the Lord Chief Justice too, but so far neither has arrived, and as it's getting late I'll venture to take their place, but only until they come.' She smiled brilliantly: 'I hope that you'll be rid of me long before Mr Tinkler has finished his reading.'

Mr Tinkler was understood to say: 'Not at all,' and there was mild applause as he rose.

Mr Tinkler rose, but Mrs Burns did not sit down;

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she continued : 'I mustn't tell you what Mr Tinkler's play is about; some of you who acted in it will know already, and I dare say there are others among you who may have seen it at the Abbey Theatre, that very delightful performance in that dear little theatre which, I am sure, is the—the . . .' she broke off, 'I forget what Mr Yeats called it. But we all know the Abbey Theatre, and how wonderfully it has changed the life of Dublin since the days which my friend here, Colonel Newton, remembers, when it was a mausoleum.'

'Morgue,' said Colonel Newton, and this correction was repeated by others.

'Was it a morgue?' said Mrs Burns : 'I didn't know : that makes it almost more interesting, like Paris. But there, I mustn't keep Mr Tinkler waiting any longer; all I can say is that I saw "Deirdre" at the Abbey Theatre'—she hesitated, and appealed to Mr Tinkler : 'It was "Deirdre" I saw, wasn't it?' and, without waiting for his reply, finished brilliantly : 'After all, what does it matter? The great thing is to hear Mr Tinkler read his play, and, whether we like it or not, if such a thing were possible, to discuss it afterwards; for, after all, the great thing about reading is not so much the reading itself as the conversation that arises from it afterwards. I am sure that Mr Tinkler's delightful poem, yes, I mean poem : it is a poem, though an unusually long one, will give us much food for conversation. I know, for instance, that the Marchesa della Venasalvatica, who took a leading part in it, will have much to say which will be helpful to all of us.' At this there was a burst of ironical applause, through which Adam could just hear Mrs Burns saying : 'I will now again call upon Mr Tinkler,' and sat down, clapping her hands, as if summoning Mr Tinkler in the manner of the Arabian Nights.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

MR TINKLER READS HIS PLAY

WHEN he had got used to the author's method of delivery, which made it difficult to guess which of the characters was supposed to be speaking, Adam liked Mr Tinkler's 'Deirdre of the Nine Hostages' pretty well. The opening of the play was moderately clear. King Conchobar had an interview with his wife in these terms :

Conchobar : Remember, Deirdre, you are the High King's wife, and I am he.

Deirdre : How could I forget? Do you not know that I have given nine hostages to you and Fate?

Conchobar : Who is Fate? Is he some strolling player that frets an hour in the booths at the hurley matches?

Deirdre : Conchobar, you jest with me. You love great laughter.

Conchobar : I am all for greatness and broad jest. Subtlety is not for me. I have forgot how many hostages you gave me. Who am I to waste my time counting an endless flock? Write down their names in a fine hand in the Holy Book, and I will, some great day, perhaps, to come, commit the lot to memory. Yours and mine.

Deirdre : They are all yours, Conchobar.

Conchobar : I thought you were a widow when we married?

Deirdre : I have counted only your children

Conchobar : And they are nine. I had reckoned

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between seven and eight. But it becomes not a king to doubt his own greatness. Let them be seven score. What care I, if I am not disturbed at my writing? I will remember that you have said that they were nine. Let you remember to see, in times to come, that they are neither more nor less. For, if doubts creep in, I can be great even in doubt. Let you not forget this, Deirdre, and, above all, let you remember . . .

Deirdre : What?

Conchobar : Let you remember not to forget yourself with . . .

Deirdre : Whom?

Conchobar : Never let his name be spoken within the grove of the sacred tree of Clonmacnoise.

Naisi : (*His face appearing through the branches of the sacred tree*) He means me. I am Naisi, the lover of his Queen. I would die for her a thousand times. I have not yet, but the hour of my passion is at hand. Conchobar is going out and I am coming in. But the end of love is rarely satisfaction. And all is already over before it has begun. And I am not sorry that it is so. To love Deirdre is to long for death. Still, I must not let him see me yet. Else he should think I came in homage to the High King and not to . . . I must be a dissembler and hide my head. (*Conceals himself in tree.*)

Deirdre : Why do you leave me, Conchobar?

Conchobar : Great kings have greater kings to rule them. They greater still. And so on into infinity.

Deirdre : You will be writing in the castle all the day? Writing, perhaps, late into the night?

Conchobar : Question me not too closely. These times is there warring upon us. I can see one that should be carrying a hackbut 'midst the gallowglasses, could I clap hands on him.

Deirdre : (*As if thinking of looking round*) Where is he . . . ? Who, O King?

Conchobar : It is Naisi, the nameless one.

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Deirdre : (*Inaudibly*) Naisi !

Conchobar : He is hiding in the sacred tree (*Distractedly*) Would I had my ebon catapult with but an elastic and a stone, and I would mend his manners.

Deirdre : (*As before*) Thy catapult will sever my heartstrings if it pierce but a hair on Naisi's head.

Conchobar : (*Even more distractedly, tearing two volumes of the archives from an ancient chest*) Ask him how many river horses drink the Nile. He is an idler. Even a hurley stick breeds terror in his soul. I am a king. . . . (*Fumbling in chest and throwing papers about in his madness*) Where is my pen? Will my archives never be full? (*Flings down the lid of the chest and exit stormily.*)

Having got rid of Conchobar, Mr Tinkler paused, and sipped a glass of water. 'That is the end of the first scene,' he said, 'and before I go on I think that, as there may possibly be someone here among you who has not seen the play as it was performed at the Abbey Theatre, that there are things they must visualise for themselves as I read. For instance, King Conchobar always carried two volumes of the archives about with him.'

'How does he carry them?' asked Mr Leaper-Carahar portentously.

'He carries one in each hand,' the poet explained, obviously grateful for his host's interest.

'Thank you,' said Mr Leaper-Carahar, and promisingly cleared his throat. 'I take it the volumes would be of moderate size?'

'They must not be too small,' the poet said deprecatingly. 'At the Abbey they were not quite what I would have wished.'

Mr Marcus Pim rose in his place to say: 'As a matter of interest, I noticed at the time that one was the Douay Bible and the other Thom's Directory,' and sat down again amidst laughter led by himself.

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'I shudder at the thought of what happened at the Abbey Theatre,' Mr Tinkler declared, 'and even more of what was written about it in the papers.'

'Hear, hear,' broke in Mr Macarthy resoundingly.

Mr Leaper-Carahar spoke again, this time consulting his notebook: 'Why does His Majesty carry two volumes of the archives about with him?'

'To show that he is a man of action,' said the poet readily. 'That is pure symbolism; taken as a whole, my "Deirdre of the Nine Hostages" is a static, rather than a kinetic, play.'

'One moment,' said Mr Leaper-Carahar, stepping forward to wave a fountain pen under the poet's nose: 'How do you spell the last word?'

'P L A Y,' Mr Tinkler informed him with a baffled air.

Mr Leaper-Carahar frowned and shook his head. 'No, no . . . The word before that.'

Mr Tinkler consulted his manuscript for the necessary information. (Which, Adam noticed, was conveyed not only to Mr Leaper-Carahar's book, but the shirt cuff of the policeman, who appeared to think there was something in it)—And, after an awkward pause, went on: 'Conchobar carries his archives to show that he is a man of action. Naisi and Deirdre just exchange beautiful speeches and do nothing.'

'How I look forward to the first of the beautiful speeches,' cried Mrs Burns ecstatically.

'We are coming to them in a moment,' said the poet.

Mr Carahar cleared his throat again. 'Am I right in supposing that you did not intend the opening remarks of their Majesties' to be anything in particular?'

Mr Tinkler shuffled on his feet. 'I hoped . . . I must not say more than that I hoped, these lines had a charm of their own, considered as pure protasis . . .'

'Pray be so good as to spell that,' Mr Leaper-Carahar broke in, and swept round to his company to explain: 'In my position you cannot be too exact.'

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When this question had been answered, an old lady asked another: 'Would the gentleman who is addressing the meeting be so kind as to mention, if he has not already done so, why one of the gentlemen does something, but the lady is never allowed to do anything?'

'In my play,' Mr Tinkler declared, 'nobody does anything worth talking about.'

'Why do they talk about it?' asked Mr Marcus Pim, who seemed to find some backers.

But Mr Tinkler was not so unwise as to answer that question. 'My play,' he insisted, 'my play is static. Practically nothing happens. In kinetic plays, such as Synge's very successful, in the popular sense, play, "The Playboy of the Western World," and that other great popular success, I believe the greatest success of our time, "What Rot!"'—

Here the speaker was interrupted by a hiss from Mr Macarthy.

A sulky look came over Mr Tinkler's face. 'Does anyone deny that fortunes have been made out of "What Rot"? Far more than ever was made out of "The Playboy of the Western World."' "

Mr Macarthy rose in his place, the only time Adam had ever seen him flushed and angry: 'I cannot understand Mr Tinkler's object in comparing Synge's play with "What Rot!" Let him compare his own play with it if he likes.'

'All the same,' Mr Tinkler returned, with an effort at dignity, 'the fact remains that in the "Playboy" and in "What Rot!" things do happen. In my "Deirdre" nothing happens. You will find that as the play goes on Naisi and Deirdre do nothing, absolutely nothing . . .'

'Excuse me,' said Mr Leaper-Carahar, 'just before you go on, I would like to point out that there is a question before the meeting, put, I think, by' again he cleared his throat 'the Honourable

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Mrs Smith . . . Why does Naisi do even less than Conchobar?’

‘I did not hear that question,’ Mr Tinkler declared, ‘or I should have answered it at once. . . . Deirdre and Naisi do nothing, because that is the most beautiful thing that a man and a woman can do.’

‘D’ye mean,’ called out the Honourable Mrs Smith, ‘that it would be a beautiful thing for the world to come to an end?’

‘Certainly not,’ replied Mr Tinkler, with what, for him, was a sort of fire, ‘I think that it should come to nothing. It should stand perfectly still in a charming attitude.’

At this point there was a real burst of applause from Mrs Burns and the gentleman with the ear-trumpet in his lap seated next to her. Mr Tinkler glowed with triumph as he tapped his manuscript with an inky finger. ‘Naisi is a hero, therefore he is beautiful. Beauty is an attitude. If he does anything he must change his attitude. . . . In other words, lose his beauty. Even if he takes up an equally beautiful attitude afterwards. . . . Still, there is an ugly interval. . . . Let us take a humble example from real life. . . . Though that has nothing to do with art. . . . A man may have two beautiful pairs of trousers, but a man changing his trousers, or, shall we say, trousers in the act of being changed by a man, cannot be beautiful in that act.’

As he paused to look round after this close argument, he caught the eye of Mr Leaper-Carahar, who said approvingly: ‘I think I follow you. . . . You mean that, while Conchobar may change his trousers, Naisi and Deirdre’—at this point Mrs Leaper-Carahar was seen to lay her hand on her husband’s coat sleeve, and he paused.

Mr Tinkler was very pink as he helped his host out of what seemed to Adam a tight place: ‘If I were a prose writer and not a poet, that is how I might

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express it. Not to waste the time of you all any further, I will now go on with the reading of my play. When Conchobar goes off, Naisi again shows his face through the foliage of the sacred tree . . . This could not be done at the Abbey, as there was no tree . . . and says :

Naisi : He says he is a king. I do not think so. For great kings do nothing. Conchobar is great, but he is not a king. He is a clerk, a priestly shaven clerk, a beardless priest . . .

Deirdre : Did you not hear me say I gave nine hostages, nine little cooing bonhams, to him and Fate?

Naisi : To him and Fate, to Conchobar and Fate. Were they, then, two?

Deirdre : They are the same, for Conchobar was my fate. I am a part of him and he of me. Or so I thought before I changed my mind, and will again, if you do nothing, always.

Naisi : Let me think.

Deirdre : I am old and have no time for thinking. Let us . . . Why should we not?

Naisi : You would say 'Let us pray.'

Deirdre : I said my prayers this morning; let us now talk.

Naisi : Yes, let us talk about the great things we shall never do.

Deirdre : Listen to me.

Naisi : I am always listening. It is not often I that does the talking.

Deirdre : You do not know me when I am asleep.

Naisi : I would that we could go to church, Deirdre. But you were twice married ere that I was born, and Brehon Law . . .

Deirdre : Sometimes I feel I am above the law. But when I say that to Conchobar he beats me.

Naisi : Saint, what you suffer from that man, that man.

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Deirdre: You would not beat me, Naisi, even if . . .

Naisi: I would never be doing anything any time.

Deirdre: Not even now? (*As if thinking of approaching the tree*) Stranger, last night I dreamt that you were climbed down from the sacred tree. And when I woke I almost wished it might be true.

Naisi: The saints forgive my saint. If this were true, then are we wandering in a labyrinth, a sort of maze, holding intricate path most closely to its bosom, mocking the senses, which seem to render difficult the way, and hard it is to find it, because on either hand, or both, the path is lost between the hedges which offend the eye by robbing them of their own heaven-born sight. . . . Deirdre, my Queen, did he who made these hedges make thee too?

Deirdre: Do you not wot, Naisi, that these hedges are the High King's hedges, whoever made them?

Naisi: Vile topiarian! . . . Though they be the High King's high hedges, if they were not so high maybe I could leap over them.

Deirdre: (*Almost as though about to move*) And so could I: to hop and skip and jump was my delight before I met with you.

Naisi: How long before?

Deirdre: What does that matter now?

Naisi: It matters nothing to our love, Deirdre. But I was thinking thoughts of awful joy if we could jump the hedges.

Deirdre: Of how awful joy?

Naisi: (*As one who does not hear*) I could, perhaps, cut one of them down a little if I had a knife. They do not grow on trees.

Deirdre: All the knives are gone to feed the wars that Conchobar will make against the rebels when he has done writing.

Naisi: (*Mysteriously*) When he has done writing.

Deirdre: Misdoubt not! He is fond of war, but he

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is too great a king, while the event can hang in any doubt, to go to it.

Naisi: Have you no scissors, Queen?

Deirdre: They, too, are gone as food for powder. They will serve for swords to cleave out shapes of buckram to clothe Conchobar's soldiers cap-à-pie. I think that the armies march the moment he stops writing.

Naisi: He will never stop. He has the writing madness. The archives that he writes have nothing in them and can never end.

Deirdre: It is an open secret we shall have, perhaps, few more children. Then he'll stop.

Naisi: (*Sadly*) Nothing can stop him unless nullity. And there is none when nothing is annulled.

Deirdre: Let you not be talking great words, *Naisi*. When all's said, there is no maze, but in that fairy ring, your mind.

Naisi: I never thought you would have been the one to have said that. Say on.

Deirdre: Below the bottom of the sacred lawn there lies a river. 'Tis a poor river, *Naisi*: there is no horse, nor whale, nor hippopotamus there to ride.

Naisi: River horses and hippopotami are one to me.

Deirdre: There is not even one of either, *Naisi*.

Naisi: That will be all the better if we swim.

Deirdre: I cannot swim, though once upon a time, near Baile's strand, I floated on my back. . . . I did it very well, but that was sea. . . . I know not, in fresh water, if I could. . . . Fresh running water that might run with me down to the Gaelic Undine's secret nook.

Naisi: True, it might suck you down, or bear you up, or throw you back on shore. We are but pawns at chess: better do nothing. . . . The risk is far too great. I could not bear that anything should happen to you. I'll go alone. (*He makes the slightest possible*
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movement, as though wishing to go, whereupon the sacred tree breaks, and he falls at Deirdre's feet.)

Deirdre: (As if about to make a movement towards him, after the curtain falls) Now I have got you, and you shall not go

'That,' said Mr Tinkler, 'that is the end of the first act; unfortunately, as I have said, there was no tree at the Abbey Theatre, and so I had to speak the lines of Naisi with my head around one of the wings, which made it difficult, I understand, for the pit to hear me. Also, I regret to say, that the last of Deirdre's lines was spoken by her some pages before they come in the text, and, consequently, the curtain fell too soon.' He paused here while Mr Pim applauded. When this had subsided, he continued: 'In the circumstances, I imagine there was some confusion in the mind of the audience as to my precise meaning. I think I am justified in hoping that I have to-day made that meaning, by reading the part of Deirdre myself, quite clear.' He sat down, and emptied his glass, amidst applause, which, so far as Adam was concerned, was genuine.

After a moment's silence, Mr Leaper-Carahar declared, in a note of challenge to those who might be critical: 'I must say,' and then consulted his notes, 'I was about to say that I must say that there is a great deal in Mr Tinkler's play which is quite up to the standard of some London theatres.'

'I told you so,' cried Mrs Burns.

Adam was surprised to hear Barbara hiss through bitten lips: 'I wish you two would not conspire to make me ridiculous.'

There was much in the first act of 'Deirdre' that had pleased Adam: although amused, he was also touched. But the second act was less compelling in its interest. It opened with a long scene between the Three Eavesdroppers and the Three Mutes, in which the Eavesdroppers sought to obtain from the Mutes

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detailed information as to the relations subsisting between Naisi and Deirdre. Adam thought that the Eavesdroppers were unnecessarily prolix in their questions and unconscionably slow in suspecting the reason why they received no answer. . . . The following scene, in which the Eavesdroppers, having heard nothing from the Mutes, started to concoct a story about the lovers for themselves, was slightly more dramatic. And the next scene, in which they told what they had invented to Conchobar, was promising to be quite effective when Adam was alarmed to hear himself snore, and found that Mr Tinkler was well on in the last act. He pinched himself into wakefulness and listened steadfastly to the end of the tragedy. He picked up the threads as Mr Tinkler was reading, thus :

Naisi : What I have said I have said, and nothing can be done.

Deirdre : (*Almost keening*) And I am not undone, yet are we both undone; for, see, one comes. (*Enter the First Mute, with the appearance of one running.*)

First Mute : The King has cursed me with great oaths into finding my voice. He is coming here cursing. The Eavesdroppers have done you great wrong. You will be flying now, the two of you, if you had the wisdom of little fleas.

Deirdre : There is no beauty in fleas, nor wisdom.

First Mute : There is sense in them, Queen Deirdre, all the same. I have legs, and, therefore, will run. I will be running to the Bog of Allan and hiding my head in it. For there is great shame in the house of Conchobar.

Deirdre : It is for Conchobar to shame himself, and not I.

First Mute : He is a great king, even in his wrath, and writes down his curses in the archives as he lets them. . . . Oh . . . Oh . . . Woe . . . Woe ! (*Exit First Mute, running imperceptibly as before.*)

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Naisi : If one of us were to go somewhere now, perhaps it might be well.

Deirdre : And if one goes, why not two?

Naisi : For two to go one road, who but yourself would think of that?

Deirdre : Are my thoughts still new to you, Naisi?

Naisi : As the Phœnician Queen's.

Deirdre : I know : the Queen that lodges in the grove of the Phœnix.

Naisi : If I could arise now, I would, maybe, go to her.

Deirdre : Alone, Naisi? Is it alone you would be going?

Naisi : I could never be alone for long. . . . Where is Conchobar?

Deirdre : If he is not coming here with great curses, as the Mute foretold, he is surely in the castle writing down the words of his Eavesdroppers.

Naisi : There is great height in his lowness.

Deirdre : Why do you say that, now?

Naisi : I think of him always there, always writing, filling the world with words that, for all we know, may be fine.

Deirdre : No, not fine, Naisi, not fine; strong, maybe, but never once refined.

Naisi : I will say nothing against even Conchobar, lest he hear me.

Deirdre : Hush ! will you listen to him cursing. (*Her eyes appear to indicate the direction in which Conchobar is coming.*)

Naisi : His is the better part.

Deirdre : You do not know him as I do, Naisi, with his goblet filled by the arch-secretary's butler, or throwing dice on the green.

Naisi : I have never diced nor drunk deep : I have always been temperate. . . . Perhaps that has been my undoing.

Deirdre : You are not undone yet. Let us go

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together now, Naisi : you can see the shadow of a ship by the garden gate : it is tied to the pale. The crew are gone and will never come back. You can row, or maybe let her drift.

Naisi : Conchobar would sink her with one of his great curses. It will be less trouble to be killed here.

Deirdre : You do not believe, as I do, in the beyond.

Naisi : At least, there will be nothing.

Deirdre : He is coming now. If you cannot save yourself, Naisi, think of me.

Naisi : I have done too much already. (*Enter Conchobar with archives, one of which he lets fall on Deirdre's harp, breaking the third string. A cannon is shot off.*)

Naisi : Why did you do that? We have not wronged you.

Deirdre : You might have waited.

Conchobar : I have waited long enough. Must a king have patience? Are my Eavesdroppers to lie for nothing? Conchobar was never harsh to the poor.

Deirdre : Harsh to his poor wife was Conchobar.

Naisi : And never friendly to her friends.

Conchobar : I will strike the golden head against the grey : they are of one softness. (*Kills them, takes up archives, and goes out weeping. Then enter the Three Mutes, who place Deirdre and Naisi on a bier, the broken harp between them.*)

First Mute : Now we may speak, for there is none to hear.

Second Mute : Is Deirdre really dead, or does she sagely imitate the little red fox?

Third Mute : Hush ! Conchobar is greater than ever in his loss. (*Enter Conchobar, in mourning, and without the archives.*)

Conchobar : I see some speculation in their eyes : they are not dead.

Deirdre : Naisi will be remembered for ever. (*Dies.*)

Naisi : And Deirdre too. (*Dies.*)

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Conchobar : And what of me. (*With authority*) My Mutes, I charge you, speak.

First Mute : You have broken Deirdre's harp.

Conchobar : Hang it on Tara's walls.

Second Mute : They would fall down.

Conchobar : I will shore them up to bear a greater sorrow.

Third Mute : They are falling now.

Conchobar : How do you know?

First Mute : There is not a brick left standing.

Conchobar : You cannot shake me : I am too great.

Second Mute : I can hear strong men mewing like spavindy goats.

Conchobar : They are calling for me at Armageddon.

Third Mute : They are fools.

Conchobar : You must not speak so to your king.

First Mute : Whether they are calling you or not, you had better go.

Conchobar : (*With great enlightenment in his eyes*) You had better go. That is the word I heard spoken in the grove of the Phoenix : set down naught in malice. Tell Deirdre and Naisi I am sorry they are dead. (*Exit.*)

First Mute : Is he mad, or what?

Second Mute : He is neither, or the one or the other, or both.

Third Mute : Conchobar was always like that.

First Mute : Conchobar was the greatest of all in his greatness.

Second Mute : But Deirdre and Naisi had the conquest of him for beauty.

Third Mute : This play of Conchobar's greatness and Deirdre and Naisi's beauty will outlast all time.

Mr Tinkler, taking breath at this moment, his audience gave him the applause due to a poet who had devoted himself to their entertainment, at no little cost to his physical comfort; for he was as winded as

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an ill-trained hunter after a steeplechase. But he motioned them to withdraw not from him their full attention, and, with the air of a man coming at last to his point, went on reading :

(Enter the Three Eavesdroppers, with three blind musicians who play sad music on sackbuts. The Eavesdroppers sing :)

We have seen with listening eyes
Tidings of a great surprise :
We have heard with seeing ears
Wormwood tales of hopes and fears.
As we climbed the castle stair
To my lady's chamber, where
We beheld a red-haired man,
Who said Kathleen-ni-Houlihan
And fair Deirdre were the same,
Changed in nothing but in name.
Now to Conchobar we go,
And we will surprise him so
That the pang of the surprise
Will tumble tears down from his eyes.
Great will be the great king's pain
When he knows whom he hath slain,
And cannot call alive again.

(Exeunt the Three Eavesdroppers, followed by three blind musicians, still playing their sackbuts sadly. A green light is thrown on Deirdre, and, if possible, an amber on Naisi. The back of the stage should be rather dark from now to the end of the play.)

First Mute : Who would believe what the Eavesdroppers would be saying, and they going everywhere telling lies?

Second Mute : There is not a word of truth in it. There is no truth in anything at all.

Third Mute : There is no truth, now, that Deirdre and Naisi are dead, but that the people will be playing this story of their deaths and their beauty and their

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love and of what never happened at all until the world will be standing still to listen to it.

Deirdre : That is a true thing. But the Eavesdroppers, too, knew a true thing. Though they did not know that it was a true thing, but only a thing, true or not. Let me be rising now and I will tell you the truth of it all.

First Mute : The truth of it all.

Second Mute : She's going to tell us the truth of it all.

Third Mute : Deirdre is going to tell us the great truth of all the great truths : the truth about the things that no one tells about.

Deirdre : Listen to me, now, and I will tell you the truth. The red-haired man . . .

First Mute : Is he mad, or what?

Second Mute : He is neither, or the one or the other, or both.

Third Mute : Conchobar was always like that.

First Mute : Conchobar was the greatest of all in his greatness.

Second Mute : But Deirdre and Naisi had the conquest of him for beauty.

Third Mute : This play of Conchobar's greatness and Deirdre and Naisi's beauty will outlast all time.

(Enter the Three Eavesdroppers . . .)

Here Mr Tinkler abruptly checked his reading, fumbled wildly with the papers in his hand and on the table before him, and in his pockets, and even within his shirt. 'This is dreadful,' he stuttered. 'I have lost the last seven pages of my manuscript. . . . That is to say, I must have left them at home and brought carbon copies of the part I've already read instead.'

'Better have carbonised the lot,' growled Mr Macarthy.

But Mrs Burns said : 'Do read what you have there over again : it is all so beautiful. What does it matter where it begins or ends?'

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'Go on, man!' shouted Mr Marcus Pim, without troubling to rise. 'Sure, what does it matter?'

Mr Leaper-Carahar impressively took ground. 'I am afraid I cannot agree with the last speaker. If I am right in supposing that Mr . . .' he consulted his notes, 'Tinkler intended his work to be a work of art, and, frankly, I suppose that he did, and I am sure that there are things in it which are a credit to a city like Dublin, cut off as it is from the centre of the artistic world round Charing Cross.' Again he consulted his notes. 'I was about to say that Aristotle, or it may have been Ruskin, says that a work of art must have a beginning and a middle and an end. This is almost a truism, for, clearly, there is nothing else to distinguish a work of art from any other work. I have no wish to take up time which was meant for rejoicing, if I may say so, on Mrs Leaper-Carahar's first public appearance as my bride, if I may call her so, by further reference to Mr . . . to his play. But I would like to ask the author if he has no notes of any kind, or could tell us anything from his recollection, which would help us to form an opinion as to what ultimately happened. . . . If Deirdre was really alive, as seems to be indicated, did Conchobar kill her again, or divorce her, or take her back? For there does not seem to have been any real connection between her and the gentleman whose name I did not catch. . . . And, if so, why?'

Adam was conscious of a general feeling throughout the assembly that their host's question went pretty near the root of the matter. And Mr Tinkler was not as frightened by it as Adam thought he might have been in the like case.

'It is implicit, in my view of beauty, that nothing should happen to my leading character,' the poet explained. 'Deirdre merely says that what the Eavesdropper says about what the red-haired man said is not, as the Mute said, more or less untrue. She

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says she really is Kathleen-ni-Houlihan. Apart from any little merit my play may have as pure literature, I claim that the idea of making Deirdre the same person as Kathleen-ni-Houlihan is a really important addition to the folk-lore of ancient Ireland. Also, I need not point out that it is in the best sense dramatic; for it comes in the nature of a surprise to those who are accustomed to the conventions of Yeats and Synge and Russell and Trench and Canon Smithson, though the last mentioned author did show some originality by imitating Spenser so far as to make Deirdre the same person as Queen Elizabeth.'

'Shame to Captain Simpson,' said the old gentleman with the ear-trumpet next Mrs Burns, who added: 'Hear, hear.'

Mr Tinkler gathered momentary force from Mrs Burns' encouragement. 'I do not think that Canon Smithson followed a good model in imitating Spenser, but I think that he was on the right line before he went off it. It was in the true spirit of romantic poetry that he made Deirdre something that she was not. My idea was to make her the same as Kathleen-ni-Houlihan, and that is why I gave her grey hair. To the bourgeois mind, such as that of Conchobar, would be in real life, say, a Castle official . . .'

'A . . . what?' cried Mr Leaper-Carahar, bouncing up, while the policeman in khaki made feverish notes.

'I do not mean a Castle official of the type that is interested in the fine arts, such as our host,' Mr Tinkler tremblingly explained. 'I mean quite a different type, one that is now probably disappearing, the, in fact, bourgeois type. To his mind, Deirdre would have appeared an ordinary old woman . . . though, I must say, more tidy in her appearance than some old women who ought to know better.'

'Hear, hear,' said Mr Leaper-Carahar, glancing meaningly towards the Marchesa: 'Hear, hear,' and once again 'Hear, hear.' Two officers in khaki echoed

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this, conceiving it to be their duty, and Mr Leaper-Carahar sat down, content to be acknowledged as a patron of the fine arts.

And so Mr Tinkler concluded: 'To her bourgeois husband, Conchobar, with his wrong sort of official mind, Deirdre appears as an old woman. Not so to the poet, Naisi, who loved her, who is ready to die for her, and, in fact, does die for her . . . to him she appears, even in death, to be a beautiful young girl.'

He expressed this sentiment so very touchingly that Adam felt there really was something in it: though he could not say what.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

VIEWS DIFFER AND FOG RISES

As Mr Tinkler's voice died away in a tremulo, the last accents drowned in his glass of water and a murmur of applause in which the dominant note related less to the passion of Deirdre than the pleasantness of tea, Mrs Burns sprang to her feet and essayed to check the stampeding guests. Against the dissonance of their chatter and the mellow note of Mr O'Toole chanting: 'Pass along there, pass along there! Downstairs to the boofay!' she pitched her appeal: 'Do let us have a little discussion about the play. . . . Let us tell each other and the great author what we think it means. . . . And then perhaps he in his turn will be so good as to tell us what he thinks it means if he isn't too tired.'

'I am rather exhausted,' murmured Mr Tinkler, mopping his brow, 'and I think I have explained as much as was necessary. . . . I never was very good at explaining, I find it wearisome.'

'Well, then,' Mrs Burns insisted, 'if you're too tired I'll ask Mr Macarthy to explain the meaning of the play.'

'What is there to explain?' Mr Macarthy rose from his seat to ask. 'I am under the impression that the thesis of Mr Tinkler's play lies in a man, called Conchobar, thinking another man, called Naisi, to be on more familiar terms with his wife, called Deirdre, than suits his convenience. So he makes an end of one, if not both of them, in a way I did not quite understand, and then seeks a change of occupation in

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a more business-like manner than one might expect from his conversation.' He sat down again.

But Mrs Burns urged him once more to rise. 'Do go on with your exposition of the play,' she cried, 'I never dreamt of Conchobar being at all a business man. I thought him just kingly, I might almost say majestic if the word were not so hackneyed. . . . We're all learning something. No one more than Mr Tinkler himself, I'm sure. . . . Anyhow, do go on talking about something that somebody else can say something about when you stop. It doesn't really matter what you discuss so long as you discuss it. . . . I mean, of course, in a manner that leads to further discussion. Say anything that comes into your head, and when everybody else who would like to speak has said all they can about what you or anybody else says, I'll ask Mr Tinkler to reply. . . . Did I or did I not forget by the way to say how much we all enjoyed his reading of the play?'

Mr Pim said in a tone that was not entirely serious: 'I really forget whether you forgot to say it or not.'

'Well, anyhow,' said Mrs Burns, 'whether I said it or not, of course Mr Tinkler will understand. . . . The great thing now is to hear Mr Macarthy tell us what he has got to say.'

To Adam's surprise Mr Macarthy rose again: 'Very well, then,' said Mr Macarthy, 'if I must say something I beg humbly to submit that I am quite prepared to accept the play Mr Tinkler has read to us, as his masterpiece. I am prepared to believe that he will never achieve anything better than this. And it is impossible for a man's friends not to be interested in what they believe to be his best work. I have not the vanity to claim to be one of Mr Tinkler's friends, but it is easy for me to understand what they must be feeling at this moment. So I need not enlarge on Mr Tinkler's merits as a dramatist, particularly as I have no reason to suppose that he would attach the

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smallest weight to my opinion. It is not to people such as I that he will look for an audience. I confess myself constitutionally incapable of writing a play of this kind, if only for the reason that it is many years since I have been able to affect an interest in illicit passion, or for the matter of that, passion of any sort. So far as my superficial studies allow me to form an opinion, passion is as Mr Pitt shocked Madame de Stael by describing Glory—"all my eye and Betty Martin": or as I would say: Conceit. It appears to me that the only possible excuse for a man kissing a woman is as a direct intimation that he thinks her fit to bear children by him. . . .'

Mr Leaper-Carahar exploded: 'Tut tut, tut tut, tut tut,' in a manner that reminded Adam of Dr Ahern's motor-car when throttled. A few among the audience seemed annoyed by this interruption: but not so Mr Marcarthy, who said: 'I am glad that our host agrees with me.'

Up jumped Mr Leaper-Carahar: 'Not at all,' he cried, 'on the contrary.'

Adam saw a grin of delight flash over his guardian's face and disappear as he said gravely: 'At all events we shall all be glad to have from our host an authoritative statement on this subject, of which I am aware that I know practically nothing.' And he sat down, leaving Mr Leaper-Carahar, very flustered, standing alone and wiping his forehead.

Adam saw that Mr Leaper-Carahar had been placed by Mr Macarthy in a position from which he could not easily escape, for all in the room had their eyes turned on him with an interest which he had not so far aroused. 'I was only going to say,' said he, 'that I am a conservative. . . . I mean, of course, in the best sense of that word. . . . Naturally, as an official I have no politics. . . . I am liberal wherever it is possible to be liberal. . . . But, ladies and gentlemen, I will say this, that so far as the relation of real ladies

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and true gentlemen are concerned . . . And I am not thinking of anyone here . . . I believe in Romance. And, ladies and gentlemen' he said vigorously, 'I know for a fact, so does Mrs Leaper-Carahar.'

He was sitting down amidst a hum of approval over which Mr Macarthy's voice rang out challengingly clear: 'I should like to hear the lady say that for herself.'

The eyes of the audience swept from Mr Leaper-Carahar to Barbara, but she only said angrily: 'Oh, I don't believe in anything.' It sounded to Adam as if she really meant it: and his soul, which had been vaguely stirred by the play, fell sick as his eye travelled from the flushed face of her to whom he had made the most passionate speech of his life, to the form of the egregious man who possessed her body and perhaps also claimed to possess her mind.

Mrs Burns rose again. 'We all know that Mr Macarthy thinks differently from everyone else,' she said, shining with even greater brilliancy in that dark moment. 'And that is why I asked him to speak first. Now, I will call upon someone . . .' Mr Leaper-Carahar rose, but his mother-in-law, ignoring him, went on: 'I will call upon someone who, more than anyone, made Mr Tinkler's masterpiece, as even Mr Macarthy himself called it, a success before he altered it, and, I must confess, from what I heard, it seems to me, a little disimproved it. I won't say everywhere, but in some of the parts I liked, but a masterpiece it remains. . . . Everyone knows that I mean the Marchesa della Venasalvatica, so it is quite unnecessary for me to name her, but I will, I mean I have . . . Marchesa, will you perhaps be so kind, the Marchesa della Venasalvatica?'

The Marchesa bounced to her feet. She was wearing what appeared to Adam to be the cast-off suit of a gamekeeper, with blue goggles, and her manner did nor portend kindness. 'Either I am very deaf, or Mr

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. . . I forget his name, cannot read his own type-writing. . . . So I'm afraid I can't say anything about the revised version of his masterpiece, as my friend Stephen Macarthy called it in one of his fits of mockery, from which the Lord deliver all artists. Not that I mean that Mr What's-His-Name's an artist. Our hostess, I mean, of course, Mrs Burns, for I need hardly say that I am not here as the guest of a Sas-senach official, who probably has a warrant for my arrest in his breeches pocket, or wherever he keeps official documents, at the present moment. Our hostess has been kind enough to mention my success in the part of Deirdre. If I was a success in that part, that was no thanks to the author of the play. It was the spirit of that greatest of Irishwomen, Deirdre herself, that inspired me. I remember now that the author's name is Tinkler. I suppose, from Tinkler's name, that he is an Englishman, or else a German. We have a great many Germans over here just now. And, I'm sure, whatever we think of them, we all love them for hating their first cousins, the English. When thieves fall out, you know what happens, only, unfortunately, it doesn't. . . . I forget what we were talking about. . . . Oh, my Deirdre. . . . I hope Mr Tinkler, for his own sake, is a German. But, whatever he is, I resent his insolence as a foreigner in writing about an Irish subject: the most beautiful of all Irish subjects. The love of Deirdre for the man who was not, and would not under any circumstances have been, her husband. That is what I mean by beauty. But you do not get beauty in Fitzwilliam Square. . . . Some of you besides Mr Tinkler may understand what I mean. I repeat, you do not get it in Fitzwilliam Square. You get it in the country. I was brought up in the country, and I love it. Willy Yeats was brought up in the country too . . .'

'Bedford Park,' said Mr Marcus Pim.

'Excuse me,' said the Marchesa, 'Bedford Park is

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not the country. Bedford Park is Hammersmith. Many of us have been in Hammersmith, but that proves nothing. Willy Yeats has passed his whole spiritual life in the country, and so has been able to write the most beautiful Deirdre that ever was written, and I think I have read nearly a hundred Deirdres of one sort or another, not counting, of course, Mr Tinkler's. I really could not count Mr Tinkler's: it is not a Deirdre play at all, though I tried to make a Deirdre out of it, and I am glad that I succeeded. . . . I offered to play in Mr Yeats's Deirdre in a special performance for the Infant Druids, but he told me the rights were held by some English actress. It is only fair to say she had an Irish name. That is the worst of being a poor country.' Suddenly her voice gathered strength. 'There was an Irish poet once who might have written a better Deirdre than even Mr Yeats. But he was killed in, I am sorry to say, a wrongful cause, the cause, I need hardly remark, of England, against a people who, as even that old hypocrite Gladstone admitted, were struggling rightly to be free.'

Adam, whose mind had wandered from the Marchesa's address in admiration of the efforts of the policeman to pursue his report of it so far as his elbow, was conscious of a commotion. Mr Leaper-Carahar was on his feet, crying: 'This is my house, and I protest against the introduction of politics. The Soudanese were entirely in the wrong, and I am old enough to remember that their rebellion jeopardised the interest on the Egyptian bonds.' Wiping his forehead, he said, dramatically: 'My own father lost £240.'

'It's a pity he didn't lose you,' retorted the Marchesa; 'and if you think this is going to be your house, you're a bigger fool than I took you for. . . . Anyhow, we're not talking politics, as you call your own wretched, sordid, money-grubbing interests. . . . We are talking about a great poet who is dead, David Byron-Quinn.' Adam pricked his ears, all attention

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now, and so did everyone; for, as even Mrs Burns admitted afterwards, the Marchesa was making the success of the afternoon. 'David Byron-Quinn was killed before the Celtic Twilight commenced, and so he never heard of Deirdre. I'm afraid I'd never heard of her myself at that time, for I was chiefly interested in painting then. . . . All of you know my portrait of Byron-Quinn at Leinster House, and most of you know that he was my lover.' Here two ladies and Mr Leaper-Carahar went out, and immediately afterwards several more ladies came in. The Marchesa took no notice of going or coming, but continued, as though her relations with the late baronet could be the only matter of interest to the assembly: 'He was my lover, and I think I may say that, considering I was so young at the time, and knew nothing of the world, for I don't count Paris, I loved him almost as much as he loved me. I remember the first night we met, I am sorry to say it was at a Castle ball. . . . The Viceroy, either Earl Spencer or the Duke of Marlborough, introduced him to me. . . . And whatever we said or did then I don't know, but the next day we went to a rather odd sort of house, I thought it odd at the time, on the other side of the town, and he kissed me—oh! so passionately—I shall never forget it as long as I live.'

As she paused impressively, Mrs Burns was heard to say into the ear-trumpet of the old gentleman: 'I told you the Marchesa would make a good speech. That's my father she's talking about now.'

The Marchesa, having drawn breath, went on: 'After that, unfortunately, he had to go away to Africa for quite a long time . . . I think it was either the Ashanti War, that thing of Wolseley's, you know, or he may just have had to shoot elephants: anyhow, while he was away, I had a baby.' Here Adam caught Old Comet's eye, and they both blushed. The Marchesa continued: 'A dear little baby, the very image

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of him, so I wanted to keep it, but my mother, Lady Derrydown, was extremely puritanical, and threatened to stop my allowance if I didn't get rid of it, and, as I really could not live by painting, and being very young in those days, I saw no way out of it but to give it to my charwoman at the studio I had in Brunswick Street. She carelessly forgot it behind her getting out of a tram, and didn't tell me about it at the time, for fear I'd be annoyed and stop the money I gave her for its keep. Even among the humbler classes there are women who are quite unscrupulous; I should never have suspected that anything happened if, when David, Sir David Byron-Quinn, that is, came back from Africa, he hadn't wanted to see it. . . . Of course, when I gave it to the charwoman, I often wondered what she would do with it, but I was so fond of the child I really could not bring myself to talk about it. Of course, when he came back, he did not know at the time that I'd had a child, and he made me forget about everything except himself; the odd thing was he had got it into his head that he would like to have a child by me, but, somehow, it never came off, and in the end he left me for another woman; then I told him about the child we had, but when he found that it had been lost he lost his temper too, and we had quite a painful interview, after which he went out on the expedition to save Gordon after he was dead, and he was killed too. The whole thing was terribly sad, and I've often wondered what became of the child. When I first met Stephen Macarthy I thought perhaps he might be my son, but I don't think so now. . . . Anyhow, I'm quite sure his poetry will last for ever, particularly "The Dead Lover," which Barbara Burns has set quite nicely, and I'm quite convinced that if he had known about Deirdre he would have written a better play about her than anyone else. For Deirdre is the perfect love-story, and all the women who knew Byron-Quinn were agreed

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that he was the perfect lover. . . . Not even Lady Bland would say that of Mr Tinkler.'

'I have heard her say it,' gasped Mr Tinkler indignantly.

'The Marchesa reminds me of George Moore,' said Mr Pim in a stage-whisper.

Mr Tinkler rose to stutter: 'I mean the lover of her soul.'

'Blank to blank,' snapped the Marchesa. 'Anyhow, there's never been a poet in Ireland to compare with David Byron-Quinn since he died, nor such a man as he . . .' Her eyes wandered: 'I've never been the same woman since. . . . I don't care who knows'—her voice faltered, and she laid her hand on Adam's shoulder—'I sometimes think that we may find such a poet in'—her tongue stood still in her mouth, for Mr O'Toole was trying to speak to her.

Adam heard him say: 'Look here, this can't go on. That's not the way for a lady of your rank to be talking before these people.' She looked from him to Adam, and suddenly collapsed. Adam helped to support her until Mr Macarthy relieved him, saying: 'She wants air; you'd better go.'

Dazedly he made his way into the hall, where he was joined by Calvinia Macfie.

'What a hysterical old frump the Marchesa is,' said Calvinia. 'I'd be sorry for myself if I was as vain as that. You'd think she was Deirdre herself instead of a tipsy old rag-bag.'

'I can't help thinking she was like Deirdre once,' Adam protested; 'I've seen photographs in which she looked quite charming.'

'Have you ever seen her look charming herself?' returned Calvinia. 'I dare say that Leaper-Carahar looked charming as a baby, or his mother thought so. It isn't what you were that matters, nor what you will be, but what you are.'

'Perhaps you're right,' Adam admitted ruefully.

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'Of course I'm right,' Calvinia answered, with a snap of her strong jaws; 'I'm going home. Fitzwilliam Square. . . . If you're going that way, you may as well come too.' Silently, Adam took his hat and followed her: and, even as, ten years ago, Lady Bland led him eastward from Stephen's Green to her house in Fitzwilliam Square, so now did Miss Macfie lead him westward from Waterloo Road to the house next door to Lady Bland. But how different his entry; for Calvinia led him straight to the drawing-room and settled him with her own hand in the most comfortable chair. Then she lit a cigarette, passed it on to him, and lit another for herself.

Adam asked politely: 'Is your mother out?'

Calvinia nodded at him through the smoke of her cigarette: 'Playing bridge; she's always out playing bridge. . . . Everyone's out to-day, and will be for an hour at least.' She sat down on the arm of Adam's chair, adding gruffly: 'Anything else you want to know?'

Adam wondered whether she really meant to have a cross tone in her voice. If so, why did she take up this friendly attitude? . . . She was a perplexing creature, this gaunt woman with her half repellant attractiveness. He counted up the months since she had frightened him to panic that first day on the Dublin Hills. He never could make out whether she recognised him or not; since then he had been accustomed to think her the most stuck-up baggage he had ever met, yet at this moment she was treating him as if they were brother and sister. . . . That was a queer trick with the cigarette: it made it impossible for him to say he didn't smoke. . . . She hadn't asked him, but just lit the thing, as if she were going to smoke it herself, and then changed her mind and passed it from her mouth to his. . . . She had rather a handsome mouth, largish, but very firm and proud. Her behaviour to him was, perhaps, firm, but there was no

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pride in it. Certainly she meant to be affable, or she would not have sat down on the arm of his chair, so close that he could feel her bosom, what there was of it, rise and fall, and hear her heart beat, quicker than he believed to indicate a normal state of health.

Her hand, with unexpected gentleness, ruffled the hair at the back of his head from the collar upwards, as she asked in a voice hardly to be recognised: 'What are you thinking of?'

'I'm listening to the music,' answered Adam readily. And, in fact, he was conscious, among other things, of an harmonium wheezing mechanically at Lady Bland's side of the wall, and children's voices wailing obstinately:

'I know that Jesus loves me,
I know that Jesus loves me,
I know that Jesus loves me:
The Bible tells me so.'

Just as in the past he would shout for an hour at a time:

'I'll be true to Jesus Christ,
And faithful unto death.'

And he had still a vague feeling that the Jesus of the slums and Father Innocent was the only true, genuine, original article; while him of Fitzwilliam Square and Lady Bland was an impostor retained in the service of the Pharisees, whose real worship was at the shrine of Mammon.

'Do you call that music?' Calvinia demanded. 'That disgusting noise next door?'

'What would you call it?' Adam asked.

'What I have called it,' she repeated, 'a disgusting noise. How could you listen to it when I am talking to you?'

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'I couldn't help it,' Adam said humbly, and was dismayed to hear himself volunteer: 'I knew a man once——' he paused; for it seemed to him that he could not speak of Father Innocent to Calvinia.

'Well?' Calvinia asked, as she marked his distraught manner, 'What about it? I've known a man or two myself.'

'Oh, it's nothing really,' said Adam.

Calvinia more or less playfully pinched his ear. 'Come, tell me about your man,' she commanded.

Adam found it strangely difficult to control his mind with Miss Macfie sitting so very close beside him. He rather wished that she gave him a little more room: he was almost stifled. He was thinking of this rather than of what he was confessing to her: 'He only said that Lady Bland was the worst woman in Dublin.'

Calvinia, faintly sniggering, asked, in a bored voice: 'Did he mean the dowdiest, or was it some sort of a joke?'

'It was no joke,' Adam assured her; 'he wasn't given to making jokes about women. . . . He was a priest.'

'Oh, a priest,' she laughed contemptuously. 'I suppose someone had told him that she misbehaved herself with Albert Tinkler.'

Adam reddened under her satirical questioning and, all unthinking, said: 'You wouldn't tell me that a lady living in Fitzwilliam Square would go and do a thing like that?'

'A thing like what?' asked Calvinia, still laughing: but, as Adam's eyes fled from hers, the speed of her voice quickened and her laughter died down to a mocking undertone: 'Do you mean that Lady Bland wouldn't sit on the arm of Albert Tinkler's chair, as I'm sitting on the arm of yours, rumpling Albert Tinkler's hair as I've been rumpling yours . . .? D'you mean that a lady wouldn't do what I'm doing

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now,' and she thrust down her savage mouth and bit his ear.

Adam felt himself unpleasantly on fire, as though Miss Macfie's teeth had set light to his ear and the conflagration was spreading. He had no will to fan the flame, if he lacked the strength of mind to stamp it out. It seemed to him that he was sorry that he had come to Calvinia's house, and yet he could not wish himself away.

Suddenly her hands caught his jaw in a firm grip, so that he could not but look her in the face. 'Answer my question,' she hissed or growled, he doubted which tone she used: 'Do you think I'm doing what a lady ought not to do?'

Adam's fatal love of the truth, inculcated by Mr Macarthy perhaps even more persistently than by Father Innocent, paralysed his tongue, and he stuttered: 'I wouldn't go so far as to say that.'

Instantly the face looking into his grew, he thought, old and horrible: the eyes that held his eyes turned to a wild cat's, and the thin hand stopped half-way in a caress to harden into a fist that struck him, forcibly as might a spent bullet, on the cheek-bone.

'You contemptible fool!' she snarled: and as Adam gazed wonderingly at her and stammered out a broken word of question, she cut him short, crying: 'Little imbecile, be off.'

Then Adam, seeing her prepared to strike viciously at him again, plunged from his place beside her and, terrified in body and soul, found himself whirling out of the room and downstairs to the hall, where he strove with eyes blind from pain to discover the means to open the door. He was too bewildered to perceive that, thanks to the foresight of Miss Macfie, it needed two hands at once, one on the bolt of each lock, to open it: and at last Calvinia, having watched him for a little while with malicious eyes from the staircase, had to come to his aid, lest his clumsiness

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should betray them both. With a pressure of her lips, oddly reminding him of Father Tudor, she beat his hand from the door with her clenched, ringed fingers on his knuckles: 'Imbecile,' she said again: 'Have you never been in a decent house before?'

He did not answer, shrinking from her that he might snatch his hat and stick from the corner where he had dropped them when struggling with the latches. Then he sprang out and down the steps, leaving the door open behind him. . . . It closed with a bang, and there followed silence in Fitzwilliam Square. But that quietude was broken once again as he hastened away into a gathering mist, broken by the wheezing of the harmonium at Lady Bland's and the piping of weary, desperate little voices singing, with their eyes fixed, no doubt, on the photograph Adam had seen in the back room of the clergyman who suffered little children to suffer coming unto him:

'Jesus loves me: this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong:
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me:
The Bible tells me so.'

The words trailed after him mockingly through the mist that was rising from the vegetation in the square, to meet another heavier cloud of fog creeping in from the sea to swallow Dublin in the coming night. No star shone in the heavens, and no bell rang.

Chapter Forty

THE WATERS THAT DROWNED FAN TWEEDY

TURNING his back on Fitzwilliam Square, and breaking his way through the thickening mist, Adam felt himself sunk again in the misery of his childhood: that misery which sees no meaning whatever in the cruelty of life. The physical pain and shock he suffered was not little; for he felt his bruised left eye swelling so that he could not use it: but the extraordinary indignity of what he had suffered chiefly impressed him. He had not gone to Calvinia's house to please himself, but only because he had felt it discourteous to refuse: and surely he had said nothing, done nothing, there which could offend the most difficult woman: his attitude had been purely passive and compliant. Yet, she had flung herself upon him in such a rage as he had seen no woman but his mother give way to, and had beaten him as none but his mother had ever beaten him. He had long regarded Miss Macfie as eccentric, and he had heard stories from Mr Pim and others of her doing queer things: but never had he foreseen the possibility of her doing so queer a thing as to kiss him first and the next instant beat him and hoosh him out of the house like a pig out of a flower-garden.

These things he thought as he scuttled out of Fitzwilliam Square and on towards Stephen's Green through the darkening mist: the road he had taken leaving Lady Bland's ten years before: but he did not think them rationally and in lucid sequence: it seemed rather that all the years of his life, near seventeen now, had been knocked into one incomprehensible rigmarole

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in his head : he was not sure beyond question whether it was his mother or Miss Macfie who had just hit him, not absolutely sure whether his mother and Miss Macfie were not, in some mysterious sense, the same person : just as he had been wondering earlier that day, as often before, whether Caroline Brady and Mr Leaper-Carahar's boasted bride were not in essentials the one being. And Josephine O'Meagher too, in that ever more confusing fog he could ask himself, had she nothing in common with either? . . . Through his aching brain worked the thought : was the earth peopled yet by only two persons? . . . A man and a woman, hidden from each other by many disguises.

It had been a wonderful day, one of the most wonderful in his life, and at moments such as when the old Marchesa opened her cobwebbed soul, careless, as a gentlewoman should be, of what the world thought of her, he seemed to hear the angel of life singing in his ear a song for him alone which in time he would learn and understand. But then came the crushing, senseless experience with crazy Calvinia, which dissipated in a muddy torrent that crystal stream percolating so deliciously into his consciousness. The thought of her made him avoid Stephen's Green and turn down Merrion Street. He could never go near the Club again, where he must meet the person who had put upon him such brutal insult. . . . Perhaps by now she had concocted some story about the whole adventure, in which he would figure as a brutal little cad and she as a lady of spirited virtue. And here his sense of humour came to the rescue, and as he bore round into Westland Row, where the fog lay heavier than in Merrion Square, he found himself smiling. After all, though his experience had been damnable, it had also been ludicrous, and it was the ludicrous side of it which everyone would see.

This reflection was not, however, very comforting to vain youth : the fall from the exaltation of seeing

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Barbara as Deirdre and himself as Naisi was too sudden. Self-satisfaction could not quickly recover from an assault at the hands of Miss Macfie. Most detestable of all women was Miss Macfie. Whom did he know who was most unlike her? To her he would go and pour out his heart and devote his years of promise. . . . Was it Barbara? . . . No, surely not. There was even in her something of that vulgar worldliness which, coloured with sensuality, was almost the whole soul of Calvinia. . . . Who, then . . . ? The railway line crossing the Row boomed an answer as the yellow lights of an invisible train passed over it: a train that in twenty minutes' time, despite the fog, would be reaching Sandycove. The woman he knew who was least like Calvinia was Josephine O'Meagher: she, and she only, had never been to him otherwise than tender and receptive. True, he had not seen her for three long years: but he knew he would find her still the same. . . .

His hand groped in his pocket for money as he thrilled to the magic thought that he could fly up the steps to the departure platform in time to catch the train which had just trundled across the bridge, and whose engine's exhaust steam filled his nostrils as she panted in the station above. Then, in twenty minutes he would be at Sandycove, and another ten would find him at Josephine's feet. It was now all but a quarter to seven: by half past, what a change would have come over all his life. . . . As in a dream, he hurried to the booking office and put down a half crown. . . . 'Sandycove, please.'

'Single or return?'

'Anything.'

Then the booking-clerk's voice, aggrieved: 'Anything won't do for me; you must say what you want.'

For the life of him, Adam could not say what he wanted. He could think of nothing but the smell of steam and fog and orange peel; hear nothing but the

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voice of a small boy, invisible in the mist, calling: 'Evening Telegram,' and then much whistling and shouting above, and the clerk's voice: 'You've missed the train, anyhow.'

Leaving his half crown, but still ticketless, Adam stormed up the long flight of steps to the platform. In front of him toiled a familiar shape, from which came a familiar voice, grunting: 'Hold on, hold on; don't let her go.' But, as the two men drew neck and neck, invisibility above called: 'Sure, I can't hold her any longer,' the gates slammed to, and then the engine caught up the train and jerked it away from Adam's eyes, red lights and all.

As Adam flung himself in childish rage against the barrier, his companion in misfortune, attaining the top, swung round to him, crying in a thick voice: 'There now, you see. That's the way the Castle encourages these railways to do you down. I never come into Westland Row that I don't say "To hell with the Wicklow and Wexford" . . . ' He broke off as they stared each other in the face. 'Adam, my dear, dear boy! What a world it is. I was thinking of you as I came up these steps, thinking of you and Josephine pillow-fighting that night you'll remember. . . . And now Josephine's gone.'

'Gone?' cried Adam, 'Josephine? Was she in the train we've missed?'

Mr O'Meagher shook his head. 'Ah, not at all: I tell ye, she's gone: she was received this morning. . . . That's why I'm in the state you see me, missing the bloody train. . . . After all, what does it matter. Damn the train. . . . Damn the railway company. . . . Damn the Little Sisters of the Holy Ghost. They've done me down between them.'

Adam's heart seemed to stand still within him, and he shook. 'Is Josephine really . . . gone?' he asked.

'Gone she is, gone for ever,' wailed her father, and then passed from sorrow to reproach. 'You might

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have stopped her if you'd held on tight. But you wouldn't. I suppose you couldn't be bothered, or Macarthy wouldn't let you. Cynical devil—believes in nothing. Won't do anything to help anyone. My wife's afraid of him, but he wouldn't take the trouble to terrify her. Said it was my business to knock the fear of hell into her.'

'Did he say that?' asked Adam, surprised even now at this anecdote of his guardian.

'No, of course he didn't,' returned Mr O'Meagher. 'He'd never use that sort of language. But that's what he meant, in his cynical English way.'

'But,' Adam objected, 'he's not English.'

'Never mind that now,' Mr O'Meagher responded. 'When I say he's English I mean he's not truly Irish, as a Macarthy ought to be. But they were all the same, the Macarthys. Wasn't it Teague Macarthy got a baronetcy, or the Order of the Bath, for taking off his hat to John Lackland, and didn't John claw the beard off him when he got him in chancery?'

Adam had doubts whether this particular honour already obtained in the thirteenth century, but he knew that his companion, when sober, was the better historian, so he did not debate the point. He asked whether Mr O'Meagher proposed to pass through the gates, now again open, and take the next train to Kingstown, whence he could proceed by tram to his own door.

'I will not,' declared Mr O'Meagher; 'I was after taking the one that's gone. But, now that I've met you, why would I ever want to go home again, and my darling girl taken from me by these lousy nuns? Sick and sore I was this morning to see them all prancing about with these crows of holy confessors, wasting their beauties on the desert air, and letting on that a Jew carpenter, crucified two thousand years ago, was the only man worth talking about in the

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whole wide world. I'd bitter words with me wife as I came away, I can tell ye.'

'What did you say to her?' Adam asked; for he, too, in his raging heart cursed her for a fanatical fool.

'I said nothing at all,' declared Mr O'Meagher, 'and well she knows what I meant by that. Never more, it meant, never more. But, sure, what does she care, with her scapulars and sodality medals and bits of the true what-you-may-call-it? She'd rather sleep with an Agnus Dei on her breast than feel my kisses falling there.' He seized Adam's arm and projected him down the steps: 'I'm not going back to-night to have her tell me that it was old Jehovah got her children for her, and not me. Come over to the Grosvenor and have a drink.'

Adam's experience of life had not so far brought him into the habit of drinking, but he was in the mood to-night which opens a youth to the temptation of bad ways; he felt as if anything might happen as he steered his tipsy companion between the trams that made the way dangerous to the Grosvenor.

But in the hotel bar Mr O'Meagher steadied himself, and said, as though his brain were reasserting itself: 'Now, I'm going to drink whisky, for there's nothing left for me to do at my age, with my daughter stolen from me, but to go to the dogs. But there's no sense in your doing it. So I'll just be giving you coffee, or beef-tea, or whatever's your tap when you and that Macarthy fellow are on the spree together. . . . He believes in nothing, does that Macarthy fellow, neither religion, nor patriotism, nor love, nor drink. And I often wonder how he lives at all and grows fat and prospers on it while better men go to hell, like me.'

Adam shook off his grasp that he might turn towards him, looking him full in the face, to say firmly: 'Mr Macarthy's the best man I know.'

Not entirely to his surprise, Mr O'Meagher's hand sought his. 'Don't mind what I'm saying in my rage,

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Adam. I know he is, at all events where young people are concerned. If he'd been Josephine's father . . . ' He drowned his sorrow in whisky and sank on to a chair, where he sat a long time silent. Adam thought he was going to sleep, when he went on again, almost mechanically: 'I've said to you more than I should have said about my poor wife. I suppose it's her misfortune and not her fault. You couldn't expect poor Innocent's sister to be quite sane. But Josephine's my blood as well as hers, and Josephine's temperament's more mine than hers, I haven't a doubt of it; and I tell you Josephine's thinking to-night, or, if not to-night, to-morrow night, and if not that, some night, then, before long. . . . Before those succubines suck her dry, that is. . . . She'll be waking in the night to cry, "Why am I dreaming about Jesus here when I might be pillow-fighting with Adam Macfadden, as I used to do when I was young. . . ." What's the matter, lad?'

When Mr O'Meagher commenced this speech, Adam had been sitting on his high chair by the bar, sipping a cup of bovril, and his mind divided between care that he should not scald himself with too great a gulp of the hot liquor, and the thought that in the scent of it was some comfort for his triple heartache of the day: Barbara's marriage, Calvinia's insulting battery, and, as it seemed now, acutest pain of all, this news of Josephine. Why was it that the sight of the train lights crossing the bridge at Westland Row had flashed up her image and not that of Caroline Brady, who had died for him? There was the real love of his young life: the only one that had known a beginning and a middle and an end. Yet Caroline, seen a few months since, was very dead to-night, and Josephine, not seen for years, preternaturally alive. Was it her father's presence beside him that recalled her? . . . It had never done so before: it had never seemed to him that Josephine, physically, resembled her father.

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Yet, looking at him to-night, he thought it possible there might be some resemblance there: not in form or feature, but in a certain expression that told of a passionate desire to live, to let live, and to make live, the absence of which first and third qualities was almost as conspicuous in the countenance of Mrs O'Meagher as in that of her brother.

From the loins of that pale young solicitor of Brunswick Street who had sung 'Let me like a soldier fall,' and died untimely of sedentary death, no living seed had sprung. He had given his children some beauty of form and gentleness of nature, which the daughter had passed on to her daughter and two sons: but the blood that flowed through their veins and had warmed to Adam's kisses on Josephine's cheeks and lips was, thought Adam, the blood of the man who sat opposite to him now, poisoning that blood with alcohol, since there was no more use for its pulsing on the earth: and he was thinking that what of it ran in his daughter's arteries would be to her only a curse in the prison life to which her own mother had inspired her to condemn herself

It almost seemed to Adam that the spirit of Josephine had entered her father now to call on him to save her from the life that was living death: that, perhaps, the Josephine that knelt that moment by the little bed in her cell at Bray, was praying already that, if only in her dreams at night, the little Adam she had kissed in love might come to her for kisses once again. For, if she might not know love even in her dream, then the bitterness of death was already come, never, perhaps, to pass away, for a nun with a double mind.

Into these thoughts broke Mr O'Meagher's query what was the matter with him. Receiving no answer, the man steadied himself to rise, leaving his glass half empty on the counter. 'It's near nine o'clock. . . . Time for young fellows to be going home. . . . Let

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me see, now, if I can't get an outside, or maybe a cab would be better, and I'll drop you at Mountjoy Square or St George's, and then, maybe, drive back here myself and take the train after all. . . . There'll be time enough for that after I've seen you safe in bed and that old devil Macarthy hearing you your prayers backwards.' He took Adam's arm and led him steadily to the door, and through it to the street.

But there a change came over him as the sea of fog bathed them both. 'It's the hell of a night, old fellow,' he said. 'Damn railways and tramways and hackney carriages. . . . It's the hell of a night for a walk. . . . Let's go round the town before we turn in.' He swung Adam round to the right and into Lincoln Place. 'Oscar Wilde born here,' he said, waving his stick at something not to be discerned in the fog. 'Used to be Opto . . . Ortho . . . Ophthalmic Hospital.' He added gravely: 'Never had any sympathy with that sort of thing,' and then he burst into song:

'The girls they cry
As I pass by,
Are you there, Mo-ri-ar-i-ty?'

These seemed the only words he could recollect, but their frequent repetition kept him employed so far as the corner of Grafton Street. Adam, saying nothing, trudged beside him, sunk in melancholy, tempered by a grim amusement at his companion's folly. Could Josephine imagine how her father would celebrate her nuptials with the church, and, if so, could she think herself best serving God by dismissing him into outer darkness?

Thus was he pondering as they strolled along by the invisible College railings, when he became aware that his companion's song had stilled, and he was talking over his shoulder to someone veiled in the mist.

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'And if you think I'm the man to do a thing like that, my dear, you're very much mistaken. . . . ' Then, less steadily: 'Sure, I'm no young masher, but the father of a holy nun. . . . ' And then, drunkenly: 'Damned if I know where we could go. . . . '

Then Adam's blood froze to the answer in the voice from darkness of an unseen woman: 'I can tell you a nice place, love: d'ye know O'Toole's in Pleasant Street?'

The next moment Mr O'Meagher, sobered, was clutching at Adam, begging him to stop, and Adam, drunk with shame, tearing himself away: to run in panic down Grafton Street. For now he saw himself clearly at last for what he was: the chick of obscene birds, gotten upon a dunghill, for all that strain in him of pride that would war down heaven. He was conscious, as he ran, of two things: within him a voice saying that in life there could be no happiness for such as he: without, the syren of the Bristol boat was calling, calling, calling him to the waters that drowned Fan Tweedy.

Through the fog he ran on past Trinity College, and, guided by the great lamps beside Moore's statue, turned back towards Brunswick Street. At the cross roads where once stood Lazar Hill, he checked a moment, doubtful of his way: but again came the syren calling yet three times to the waters that drowned Fan Tweedy. Choking, he rushed forward down Tara Street, slipped on some filth on the narrow pavement, and fell, striking his head on the curb. But in a moment he was up again and rushing forward. He could see lights on the river, he could hear the croaking of a derrick, and a confused clatter of horses and wheels. Then the wood of Butt Bridge under his feet; the feel of the iron rails to his hand. He clambered over on to the wooden platform on which, in the days when Sir David Byron-Quinn still lived, the bridge swung to allow sea-going ships up-stream, but

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never opened since Adam had known them. . . . Below him now he could hear the lap of the waters that had washed the woman of whom his father had asked too much out of the world. . . . One mighty effort of will to break the cord of life, and, as the Bristol boat sent forth her last note of warning that she was about to clear from the quay, Adam sprang. . . .

This was the end of all, he thought, and then pitched into the water and went plunging down; for, subconsciously, he had leaped from the bridge with his joined hands thrown forward, in the attitude of a diver, and he suffered no hurt in the impact. But never had he dived so deep before, and his lungs were bursting as he came at long length to the surface, and drew a full delirious breath of life across the waters of that unsavoury stream. Ay, even the fetid air that lay nethermost of the foggy vapours on Anna Liffey was drawn thirstily into his young body: and, with the nervous strokes of adolescence, he sought to cleave a path back to the world he had flung from him in disdain a moment before. For, in the pulsings of his heart that sped between the disappearance of his head beneath the waters and its emergence, his blindness had been washed from his eyes, and he saw in his mind his guardian's arms stretched out to save him. If only he could regain his grip on life, these arms would nurse him back, without question or reproof, to self-respect and contentment; for, although his grandfather, who for a moment of joy and pride had created misery and shame for so many and won despair for himself, had damned life as a miserable folly, his guardian, with much of the same blood and not a few of the same qualities, had taught him a more generous lesson . . . Had claimed him for the army of hope.

Boldly he struck out, though his sodden clothes bore him down, hampering his arms and legs. . . . He fancied himself swimming through a nightmare, a nightmare that had commenced in Calvinia's chair.

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. . . The waters that drowned Fan Tweedy, his father's fancy woman, one of his father's fancy women : perhaps the least unfortunate, were sucking him down, were singing his dirge in his ears. . . . He felt his strength oozing out of him under the fog. . . . Yet, he did not mean to die willingly; for his instinct, wakened by the clutch of death upon his throat, proclaimed, what vanity only could deny, that, to the sound of mind and body, life was good. Though his father was a pimp and his mother no better, he saw now they were but poor players, filling the parts set down for them in the prompt book of the Great Comedian who crumbled Thais and lovely Roman Flora to sour-smelling mould, even as He called lilies from the soil of swine. . . . If the world were a joke, what of that? It was a thundering good one. So he had learnt to-day from the one person who would not suffer him to deceive nor be deceived. . . . Now, if he perished in this idle fashion, the Comedian would say : 'So your sense of humour was not Mine : you will not condescend to jest with Me?' . . . Or, maybe, he would be deemed unworthy even of reproach, and would just drift out into nothingness, to dissolve at sea like a drowned beast . . . Futilely dead, as futilely as, so far, he had lived. . . .

But his life need not be futile : he had not surrendered it yet. . . . He would rather even bear the ridicule of crying for help. . . . He opened his mouth. . . . And a surge of water broke over him, filling his mouth, bearing him down to the very bed of the stream, while a strange thunder, like the beat of a giant's heart, rolled through the water into his ears. . . .

He thought he was done, surely, now. . . . One thought struggled in him still : he would not have his guardian think he had given way. . . . Perhaps, if he struggled on, his body would look as if he had not given way. . . . They would think he had fallen into

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the water in the fog. . . . He opened his mouth again to call. . . . The beat of the giant's heart thundered louder.

And then, ages after, he was drifting to the surface again, hardly conscious of his own share in the cause that brought him there. . . . But alive enough to recognise the weight of something dragging across his face. Blindly he snatched at it, fiercely he clung to it, with teeth and fingers and all of him that he could bring in contact with it, as it splashed away through the fog, towards lights that leaped from the gloom into sharper definition, till the counter of a steamer loomed overhead, and he knew the thunder for the beat of her propeller as she thrashed cautiously, head down-stream, into the fairway. . . .

Then he was struck by something as he was heaved into space by the hawser lifted inboard. . . . Again was he struck, and again. . . . But this time he felt himself falling, falling, battered, but not yet quite senseless, on the deck. . . . And then, rough voices, rough hands, a burning in his throat, brandy pouring over his lips and chin . . . Life rushing back to him with rude and maddening violence. . . .

And then the whole world reeling tipsily round him. . . . The clang of her plates, as the Bristol boat rose on the cross tide, over Dublin bar, the roar of her well-remembered syren rumbling away into the fog, and the thud thud, thud thud of her engines carrying him out to sea. . . . Wild dreams . . . Nothing clear but the vision of a tombstone with the legend of :

CAROLINE,
THE FRIEND OF ADAM.
R.I.P.

and a voice repeating thunderously :

'For ever wilt thou love and she be fair . . .'

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At last wakefulness, to find morning. . . The Bristol boat hooting her way slowly through the fog. . . .

Out of the mist reverberated the crash of a great cannon. It recurred louder and louder at longish but regular intervals. . . . A hump-backed battleship swept by in monstrous silhouette, flaming from her funnels and pounding the oily waters into billows that stormed over the steamer's lower decks and splashed to her bridge. . . .

When the sun burst through the fog she was no longer to be seen. . . . But cannon could still be heard.

Cannon could be heard that day from one end of the Old World to the other. The sun that shone on Adam's face lighted to mutual slaughter millions of men, fighting in a scarcely broken line, in double, treble, and quadruple lines, fighting in air, on land, on sea, groping to murder one another in the very depths below the sea, fighting from the heart of the African desert, where burnt the dust of Sir David Byron-Quinn, to the drenched Irish earth, where mouldered the form of that thing called Caroline, the friend of Adam. Between their two resting places, so far apart, the world they had known . . . the world that had made them what they were . . . was digging its grave.

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